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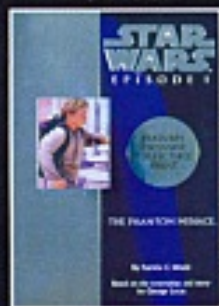
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» ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

As Queen Amidala, Natalie Portman reigns supreme over the new *Star Wars* film. Luckily, she's more than up to the challenge. Scott Chernoff talks to the young woman who's got the whole universe in her hands.

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THE WONDER COLUMN

is taking an oil bath. Anthony Daniels will be back...



ON THE COVER

Natalie Portman rules—as Naboo's Queen Amidala in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*.

Illustration by Javier Fernandez

from the editor's desk

A DAY LONG-REMEMBERED

After seeing George

Lucas interviewed on *60 Minutes* in March, my mom decided that she too was going to tough it out and wait in line the first week to go see *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. I can't decide whether this is heartwarming, or a sign that the Apocalypse is upon us.

I'm not going to lie to you: at the time I write this I have not yet seen the film. As you read this, it is most likely that you have just seen the film or are waiting in line to see it. If you've just spent three hours in line to see *The Phantom Menace*, it may delight you to know that I, the editor-in-chief of the *Star Wars Insider*, tried to pull every string, called in every favor, and used every trick in the book and I still couldn't wrangle an advance screening of the movie!

Actually, that's OK. I think it is incredibly egalitarian how George Lucas has spurned a Hollywood-style premiere and advance tickets in favor of giving everyone the same opportunity to see the film at the same time. Would you have it any other way?

I have some friends that are planning to spend three days in line—and you know what? They are going to have a lot of fun doing that. Episode I isn't just a movie, it's become a community event. People will actually bond over the trials and tribulations of getting tickets and waiting to see the film. How many movies can you say that about?

Time to go—gotta get in line. See you on the other side of Episode I, next issue.

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Maul Rots

OK guys—you have my attention now. I went out to my mail box and Insider #42 was in there, but face down. When I flipped it over, I wound up dropping it from being scared out my wits! Darth Maul: mission accomplished. No wonder our postal carrier turned it face down! It only added to my husband's and mine excitement for May.

I also wanted to say thank you for your magazine and for Star Wars Kids, as well. We are the proud parents of Leith, Lauren, Logan, Lindsey, and Lucas—the Curtis Quints—and we are saving these magazines for the kids, among other items, so they will grow to love these films as we have. (They just turned one on February 20 and they got some action figures for future playing.) Keep up the fantastic job and may the Force be with you all!

LORI CURTIS Grand Lodge, MI

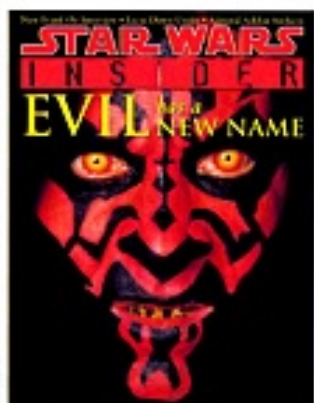
Lori, I chose your letter to lead us off this time because you're just the kind of upbeat, enthusiastic fan who personifies not only most of this month's mail but also the general feeling as Episode I of the Star Wars saga finally becomes a tangible reality after all these years. There is a buzz in the air—as I write this, the film is less than two months away (though when you read this, it will already be out—dam those long magazine lead times), and fans like you and me are becoming practically giddy at The Phantom Menace's approach.

So thanks for the good vibes and the kind words—especially about our sister mag, Star Wars Kids, which for the uninitiated is a Star Wars magazine in the fine tradition of Dynamite and Bananas, two of the magazines I grew up on (see our Star Wars magazine cover round-up in Insider #29 for some real doozies). Of course, I'm most gratified that you were so stunned by our Darth Maul cover—you weren't the only one. Mission accomplished indeed—read on for some more reactions I pulled from other letters (remember, a managing editor has to edit something).

THANK YOU! That's for the cover and cover story on Darth Maul. Since I saw his face (and his nifty dual lightsaber) in the trailer, I've been dying to see and learn more about him. This guy makes Vader look like a teddy bear! I'm going to frame this cover!

J. MICHAEL HUFF
Mt. Vernon, WA

Congratulations to the Star Wars Insider for putting out a true blockbuster of an issue. I've been a subscriber since the days of the



"This guy makes Vader look like a teddy bear! I'm going to frame this cover!"

— J. MICHAEL HUFF Mt. Vernon, WA

Lucasfilm Fan Club, and each issue really does seem to get better and better. I was very impressed by the interviews with Ray Park and Frank Oz, and the Prequel Update was fabulous! My friends and I marveled at how seamlessly the CGI blended with the live action footage. It's truly incredible! I also liked the dualism with the two interviews: Darth Maul representing the dark side, and Yoda representing the good side of the Force. Keep up the great work!

T. J. BERRY Arlington, TX

After seeing the cover of Insider #42 I felt so inspired I just had to write. Sure, I had heard the stories about a new villain in Episode I, but nothing could have prepared me for finally seeing him in the awesome Phantom Menace trailer. I mean, wow! Is this guy the single coolest-looking, scariest and most awe-inspiring villain ever created or what?! I had hoped that as the release of episode I drew closer, you might do a story on Darth Maul so everyone else could see how cool this guy is, too. Well, my wish came true with your truly spectacular cover and excellent feature on Ray Park. I enjoyed this article very much and found it to be an exciting and informative look at the person behind the character. It's nice to see what a cool person Ray is, and that he is definitely worth looking up to! Thank you for the years of excellent work as I anxiously await the new trilogy—as well as your next issue!

BEN ISAAC Quod Cities, IL

I wanted to write to you guys to mention two things: one, Star

Wars Insider #42 was probably, in my opinion, one of your top, if not your top issue ever. The articles were fantastically interesting—the Ray Park, Tim Rose, and Frank Oz interviews stand out, and it's always nice to read about people who worked with Jim Henson, a creative source of energy who is thoroughly missed and will never be surpassed.

Secondly, after reading Andy Phelps' brief letter (Insider #42) about Boba Fett's "fifth line" (I per-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 79

wanna rumble?

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episode I >> episode II

PREQUEL UPDATE

WITH RICK MCCALLUM

by Dan Madsen



For this Prequel Update, the insider caught up with Episode I producer

Rick McCallum just as he was overseeing the final phases of production of *The Phantom Menace* before its triumphant release—and eyeing the start of Episode II.

Rick, have you begun pre-production on Episode II yet?

Yes. George is writing the script, and we're really not going to do a lot of work on Episode II until June, when the first movie is out. Then [production designer] Gavin Bocquet and I will go location scouting throughout Europe, and we'll start to plan the building in Australia. So we'll be travelling most of the summer, getting everything together, starting to set up the crew, and starting to work on the overall plan of how we're going to structure the movie.

Will there be more or less on-location shooting in Episode II than Episode I?

There will be more shooting on location in Episode II.

When do you intend to start shooting Episode II?

April or May of 2000.

So George is literally working on the script right now?

Yes, he is. He's editing Episode I, but on the weekends and the early mornings he works on the script.

When will you begin the casting process for Anakin Skywalker?

Most likely in September or October.

There's been lots of talk that George now has the intention of being the only director for this entire trilogy—that he's going to direct Episodes II and III.

I would say it is most likely that he will direct Episode II—and Episode III's still an option.

Are there any characters beyond the Queen and Obi-Wan that we're going to see

come over to Episode II? I would think we'll see the droids, Threepio and Artoo.

You will see C-3PO and R2-D2, and of course you'll see Obi-Wan and Anakin—Anakin will obviously be an older character now—and of course Palpatine.

And you announced a couple Updates back that we also see Boba Fett appear somewhere in Episode II.

Absolutely.

When do you guys expect to release Episode I on video?

That's very tentative now—there's no real date. It really depends on the impact of the film. I think everybody's just going to sit back and see what's going to happen.

Now that the movie is here, people want to know—what was the process for creating Jar Jar Binks?

Well, basically what we did was we cast Ahmed Best, and then we knew that we liked his voice and we liked the way he moved, so we wanted him to be an integral part of the movie. So we gave him a costume, a Jar Jar costume, and he had a headpiece, because Jar Jar's taller than him. He was always a part of all the rehearsals and read-throughs. Every day when we'd do a sequence and set up for a shot, George would rehearse with him and the actors. They would make sure that they blocked out all the movements they had, and then we'd always film Ahmed with the actors.

We'd do one or two takes, and finally get to the take that we like, and everybody knew what the behavior was. Then Jar Jar would get out of the shot and we'd re-shoot it, very fresh, where everybody knew where his position was, and knew where they needed to be looking in order to see Jar Jar. So that's how we did it

throughout the whole movie.

Is Ahmed's on-set performance mostly for the actors, or do the artists at ILM need to see it too?

ILM needs to see the lighting reference, so they always have their plate with Jar Jar in it and the animators know what the basic movement of Jar Jar is. Then they also have the lighting of Jar Jar—what he's got to look like and the shadows that he casts on other people. Then on the empty plate without Jar Jar, they take their wire model of Jar Jar and animate it. That's where they create his performance. It's an amalgam of what Ahmed did on the set, and their imagination. George directs that performance in animation for huge periods of time.

Did Ahmed come back in post-production to do voice over work as well?

Yes, he's done all the looping and everything else that the other actors do.

Is there going to be a World Premiere for Episode I?

No. But there are going to be a number of charity screenings throughout America.

We have an interview in this issue with John Williams. It must have been an exciting moment when you and George heard John Williams' beautiful music come together with the picture. George is definitely the kind of filmmaker who feels that music plays a large part in the picture.

Absolutely. It's more than a large part—it is the whole emotional basis behind the movie.

Rick, one last question. By now, you must have seen the trailer for *Austin Powers 2*, which spoofed the Episode I teaser trailer quite hilariously. What did you think of the *Austin Powers 2* trailer?

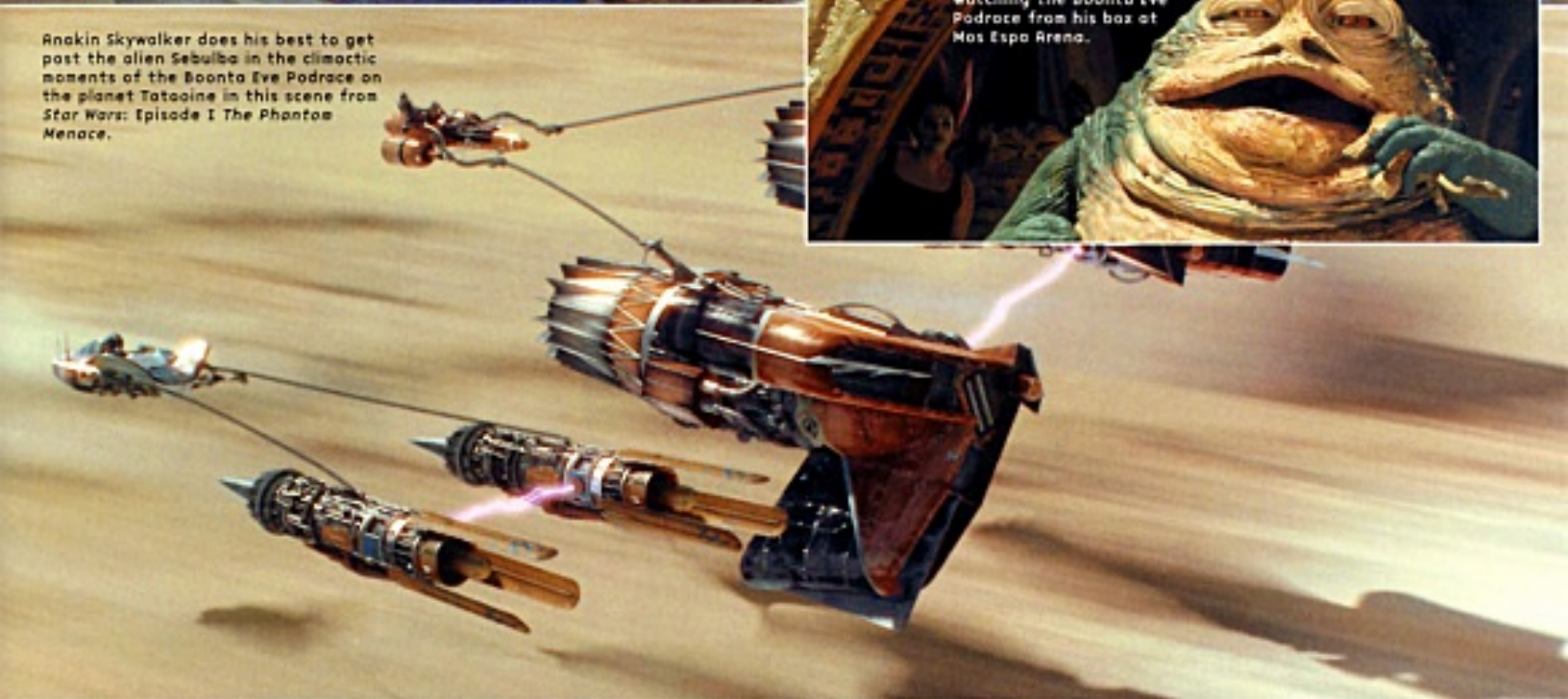
I loved it—I absolutely loved it! ☺



Anakin Skywalker does his best to get past the alien Sebulba in the climactic moments of the Boonta Eve Podrace on the planet Tatooine in this scene from *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*.




Jabba the Hutt pauses for a live snack while watching the Boonta Eve Podrace from his box at Mos Espa Arena.




Small pit droids bustle about and mechanics perform final tune-ups in the Mos Espa arena's Podracer hangar.






Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn (played by actor Liam Neeson) discusses business with junk dealer Watto in the latter's private box at Mos Espa Arena.



Anakin Skywalker (played by actor Jake Lloyd) steps in to head off a nasty confrontation between Sebulba (left) and Jar Jar Binks.



INSIDER: Tell me something—why does Darth Maul's face look that way? Is it tattooed or is that a marking from the alien species he belongs to?

RICK MCCALLUM: We have to leave that one unclear for now.

INSIDER: So that's still a mystery?

RICK MCCALLUM: Exactly.

Darth Maul (played by actor Ray Park) releases Sith probe droids in an effort to track down the two Jedi he is seeking on Tatooine.



Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn leads a charge against armed battle droids in the Theed royal hangar.



Dusk comes to the skies of Coruscant as members of the Jedi Council debate the future of Anakin Skywalker in this scene from *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. Members include (left to right) Ki-Adi-Mundi (played by actor Silas Carson), Yoda (puppeteered and voiced by Frank Oz), and Mace Windu (played by actor Samuel L. Jackson).

prequel update

Ross Nass, head of the Gungans, speaks to Queen Amidala and her retinue at the Gungan sacred place in the swamps of Naboo.



Jar Jar Binks, a Gungan swept away on an unexpected adventure, sneaks a look into a compartment aboard the spacecraft of the Queen of Naboo.



Gungan warriors atop their koodus emerge from the mists of the Naboo swamp, ready to defend their planet against the Trade Federation invasion force.



Queen Amidala of Naboo (played by actress Natalie Portman) is comforted by Jar Jar Binks as she stares out a window on a cityscape of the galactic capital Coruscant, disconsolate over the toll being taken by an invasion of her distant homeworld.

STAR WARS™

EPISODE I



QUEEN AMIDALA

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Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn (played by actor Liam Neeson) and his apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi (played by actor Ewan McGregor) pursue Sith Lord Darth Maul in the power generating room on Theed.



Obi-Wan Kenobi (played by actor Ewan McGregor) hangs on to an outcropping in the energy generator pit during a climactic lightsaber battle.



Queen Amidala (played by actress Natalie Portman) reflects on the inaction of the Galactic Senate while her peaceful planet is being invaded.

Sith lord Darth Maul (played by actor Ray Park) appears as a hologram image aboard the Trade Federation battleship in orbit over the planet Naboo.

prequel update



Jedi apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi (played by actor Ewan McGregor) engages in a furious lightsaber battle in the Theed power generator complex with the treacherous Sith lord Darth Maul (played by actor Ray Park).



Queen Amidala and some of her loyal footsoldiers storm the Naboo Palace to try to take it back from the invading Trade Federation forces.







Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn (played by actor Liam Neeson) and Jedi apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi (played by actor Ewan McGregor) take on the Sith Lord Darth Maul (played by actor Ray Park).

STAR NEWS

FROM THE WORLD OF LUCASFILM

by Scott Chernoff



Jay Stephens

BEHIND THE PHANTOM MENACE

»Fox to Present Episode I Documentary

Industrial Light & Magic will pull back the curtain on the making of *The Phantom Menace* when Samuel L. Jackson (*Episode I's* Mace Windu) hosts *From Star Wars to Star Wars: The Story of Industrial Light & Magic*, a new one-hour documentary to air on the Fox television network in June. As indicated by the program's title, the documentary will chronicle the history of ILM, "from their early days at a ramshackle Van Nuys warehouse to today's state-of-the-art digital dream factory."

The special will feature not only exclusive footage from the making of *Episode I*, but also a series of amazing new visual effects sequences featuring Jackson created by ILM exclusively for the program. In addition, the show will feature special interviews with writer/director George Lucas and special effects legend Dennis Muren, explaining the magic behind many of the movie's most fantastic sequences.

Several stars who have worked with ILM's groundbreaking effects before—including Jeff Goldblum (*Jurassic Park*), Bob Hoskins (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*), Robert Patrick (*Terminator 2*), and *Star Wars'* own Harrison Ford—will reflect on their experiences with ILM, as will top directors like Steven Spielberg (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*), Robert Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*), Ron Howard (Lucasfilm's *Willow*), and James Cameron (*T2*).

Written and directed by Jon Kroll and produced by Alberta Chu for Film Garden Entertainment, the hour-long *From Star Wars to Star Wars: The Story of Industrial Light & Magic* will air in June, although no specific date or time was available at presstime.

Phantom Menace Ushers In Digital Age

In an unexpected innovation, George Lucas announced recently that *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace* will be the first motion picture ever presented via digital projection, marking a new era in motion picture exhibition. Speaking at the ShoWest convention of film exhibitors in Las Vegas on March 10, Lucas said his latest film will be presented digitally on four specially-selected theater screens on June 18, 1999—less than one month after the movie's wide release on May 19.

"We are really at the dawn of a new age, the digital age," Lucas declared, "and I can't think of a better time to be in the motion picture business. Beginning on June 18, we expect to be able to exhibit *Episode I* digitally in four locations, using the Texas Instruments and Cinecomm projectors. I'm very enthusiastic about digital cinema—the quality, the savings in costs, the ability to do things that just aren't possible today."

Appealing directly to an audience of cinema operators, Lucas said, "It's something I've put a lot of my time and effort into, and I'm hoping that you'll have faith in the system, too. Your faith in *Star Wars* and your support of quality are very important to me."

With the four lucky theaters—two in two cities, with specifics still unannounced at press time—taking part in the unprecedented experiment, Lucasfilm appears to be paving the way to a full-scale digital release of *Episode II*, or more likely, *Episode III*. "This film is 100 percent

digital," Lucas said of *The Phantom Menace*. "It's all gone into the computer and come back out. Some of it was shot digitally, most of it was shot on film. But I'm excited about the great advances that have been made in the past year in the development of the digital camera and digital delivery."

"We've been working with Sony and Panavision for the last few years," the filmmaker continued, "and I expect to shoot my next film completely with digital photography."

Lucas also used his ShoWest appearance (which was preceded by John Williams conducting the newly formed Las Vegas Philharmonic in a stirring medley of classic *Star Wars* music) to unveil the second *Star Wars* trailer and announce that he would release *Episode I* two days early, on May 19.

"We've decided to release it on Wednesday, May 19, which is a couple days early, in hopes that we can give the fans a little head start and that families would have a chance to see it on the first weekend," Lucas explained, adding, "I'm very happy with the film."

But while the bumped-up release date sent short-term shockwaves through the more-excited-than-ever *Star Wars* fan community, the long-term impact of Lucas' ShoWest speech will likely be that, one year before the new millennium, *Star Wars* will once again bring the moviegoing experience to a new level.

Said Bob England, manager of the Digital Imaging Division for Texas Instruments—which, along with fellow digital projection pioneer CineComm Digital Cinema, will

partner with Lucasfilm for the project—"It is an honor for us to be chosen by Lucasfilm to participate in an entertainment event for which millions of people have been waiting for a long time. It demonstrates that we are within reach of achieving our goal: that Texas Instruments' DLP Cinema technology delivers an on-screen image that rivals and perhaps even surpasses film."

Lucky fans in two cities will soon get their chance to judge for themselves—and if you're one of 'em, drop us a line and tell us what you thought. ☺



Trailer B Hitched to Information Superhighway

Ah, it almost seems wistful now, doesn't it, looking back on the days when we salivated over the latest Episode I trailer. Well, those days weren't so long ago—in fact, when Lucasfilm released the second trailer (known as "Trailer B") on March 11 exclusively in Apple's Quicktime format on starwars.com and apple.com, over 3.5 million fans logged onto the website to download the two-and-a-half minute burst of *The Phantom Menace* in its first week.

The unprecedented event was hailed by Apple founder and interim CEO Steve Jobs, who said, "Over three-and-a-half million downloads in five days makes this the biggest Internet download event in history. Apple is proud to have participated in this online experience of the new Star Wars movie."

Jim Ward, Lucasfilm's director of marketing said the response has been overwhelming. "We're thrilled with the fans' response," he said. "Apple's QuickTime software provided us with the highest quality and enabled us to push Internet video to its limits."

With the second trailer

released on the Internet and shown widely on television (after premiering at Las Vegas' ShoWest convention) before its release to movie theaters, the event status that greeted the release of Trailer A in November was reversed. Whereas Trailer A was shown first at selected theaters around the country before it hit TV and the net, by the time Trailer B hit theaters on March 12, it had already been seen by most hardcore Star Wars fans.

So while November's first trailer release was a fan event at movie theaters (Insider #42), the second trailer was a major event in cyberspace. But still, the die-hards showed up to experience the new trailer on the big screen.

Jim Scott, 20, showed up for the first showing of *Analyze This* at the Mann Chinese theater in Hollywood, but left before the main attraction—he was actually on his way to the airport to catch a plane to London, but he didn't want to miss the trailer, even though he had already seen it on TV. "I never got to see the first trailer on the big screen," he explained.

Superfan Chris Ossorio, 27, who also cut out after the trailer, was overwhelmed. "It opened a whole new world to me that I've been waiting for, and showed me things that hint at the glory of the future," he enthused. "I liked the other trailer a lot, but this one was more revealing of the plot and got me more interested in the story. But visually, they were both amazing."

Informed that by the time this magazine comes out, Episode I will have been released and he will most likely have seen the movie (several times), the fan said he had one message for himself when he reads this: "Congratulations." ☺

New THX & Dolby System Surrounding Theaters

Good news for Star Wars fans who want to fully experience all of the incredible sound effects created by Ben Burtt: Dolby Laboratories

announced in March that the groundbreaking new theatrical sound enhancement it developed in partnership with THX, Dolby Digital-Surround EX (Insider #42), has become the most quickly-adopted product in cinema history.

In fact, the new system, which adds a center back surround channel to digital sound, is projected to reach 5,000 screens in the near future. So far, over 2,500 units of the Dolby SA10 surround adapter (the equipment needed to convert current systems to Surround EX) have already been ordered by North American movie theaters.

The big numbers mean more than bragging rights for THX and Dolby: they mean that more moviegoers will be able to enjoy the debut of Surround EX with Episode I. After

Episode I and the already-reported *Haunting of Hill House*, Dolby announced that Surround EX will be heard with Steven Spielberg's upcoming sci-fi film, *Minority Report*.

Episode I Premiere Gets Royal Treatment

Queen Amidala, meet Prince Charles. *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace* has been selected as the 1999 Royal Film Performance to benefit the Cinema and Television Benevolent Fund, a major event in the presence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The Royal Performance, scheduled for July 14, 1999, will serve as Episode I's European premiere.

"I am honored that *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace* has

FANFARE!

» Sony Classical Releases *Phantom Menace* Soundtrack and Video

For the first time, Lucasfilm has teamed up with the powerful international record label Sony Classical, signing in February with the label to distribute the soundtrack to *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. The album was released on May 4, preceded by a promotional single and music video for "Duel of the Fates," which world premiered at the Star Wars Celebration in Denver on April 30 before moving to MTV.

Although Sony Classical was already the home of *Star Wars* composer John Williams, who records all of his non-film albums for the label, this is the first time that Sony has released a *Star Wars* soundtrack—the original *Star Wars* soundtrack was released by Fox's 20th Century Records, while *Empire* and *Jedi* were first released on the similarly now-defunct RSO label; RCA/Victor is the current label for the *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* soundtracks.

"Sony Classical has proven itself to be a powerful worldwide marketer of soundtrack records," said Lucasfilm vice president Howard Roffman, adding that the label "has enjoyed an excellent relationship with John Williams."

For the new soundtrack, Williams—composer of the scores for *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi*—conducted the London Symphony Orchestra (the same orchestra that recorded his original *Star Wars* scores) at the Beatles' Abbey Road Studios in London. (For more on Williams, see his interview on page 54.)

"We are honored that Lucasfilm chose us to release such an important soundtrack," said Sony Classical president Peter Gelb, who told *The Hollywood Reporter* that so far the label is only pacted through Episode I. "The agreement is just for this film," he said, "but we hope to extend to the other movies." ☺



been selected as the 1999 Royal Film Performance," said director George Lucas, who will attend along with some of the film's cast and crew. "It has been a privilege to work with British crews for 23 years on 10 films. Their extraordinary commitment to the creative and technological process of filmmaking has been invaluable to me as a filmmaker."

Episode I producer Rick McCallum concurred, noting, "Since 1983, I have had the unique pleasure of working with British crews, whom I consider to be the most committed,

professional and quite honestly the most fun in the world. It brings us great pleasure to have the European premiere in London, benefiting the Cinema and Television Benevolent Fund."

The charity assists members of Britain's film and television industries who have nowhere else to turn for financial or health care assistance. With proceeds from Episode I's Royal Performance benefiting the Fund, the event will be the culmination of a string of benefit premieres for Episode I.

On May 16 (three days before

the film's wide release in Canada and the U.S.), 10 cities across North America were scheduled to host benefit screenings of *The Phantom Menace* to raise money for various children's charities. In Los Angeles, for instance, proceeds from the local premiere (with tickets starting at \$500) will benefit the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

"George Lucas has a goldmine, and he's shared it with charity," the foundation's executive director, Janis Spire, told *Variety*. "We really appreciate that."

Added 20th Century Fox film group chairman Tom Sherak, "Each of these events will have an underwriter who insures that all of the money raised from ticket sales directly benefits the charity. This is all about trying to raise as much money for charity as possible." ☺

New Star Wars Exhibition to Hit London

Setting the stage for Episode I's United Kingdom release in July, Lucasfilm will debut *Star Wars: The Power of Myth*, an all-new exhibition and road-show, on June 24. The show, which is separate from the recent Smithsonian Institution exhibit and tour in the U.S. (*Star Wars Insider* #35), will run June 24-27 at London's Manchester Evening News Arena and July 1-11 at Wembley Exhibition Hall in north London.

From there, *The Power of Myth* will go on tour throughout Europe. In addition to models and props from the *Star Wars* saga (including a life-sized 65 foot Naboo N-1 Fighter), the *Power of Myth* exhibit will also feature presentations of *The Phantom Menace* footage and behind-the-scenes material, *Star Wars* interactive games, and even a laser show from the dark side. Check out future issues of the *Insider* (or *Star Wars* magazine, our sister publication in the UK) for further coverage of this event. ☺



THEY TALK!

» The New Star Wars Action Figures Are Here!



«WATTO FIGURE»

It finally happened. After all these years, they finally figured out a way to make your *Star Wars* action figures talk. And ever since Hasbro unveiled its COMMTech technology at New York City's Toy Fair in February, the talk has yet to die down.

"COMMTech is an innovation that truly brings the excitement of the *Star Wars* experience home, and gives children a new way to play with action figures," said Hasbro chairman and CEO Alan Hassenfeld. "We're giving both kids and collectors a way to recreate the *Star Wars* fantasy, through an innovative, interactive technology."

That technology—developed by the British company Invision and called Communication Output Memory Module (COMM for short)—enables action figures to recreate their characters' lines from *The Phantom Menace*, or the sounds of their lightsabers or blasters. It works by including a COMMTech chip with each new figure, which then is "read" by the COMMTech Reader, a replica of Qui-Gon's comlink in the movie. The chips also serve as stands, feature images of their characters, and can be hung on a ball-chain (included with the Reader) to create a fashionable necklace for storage. That's one versatile chip.

"We're calling COMMTech a kind of digital trading card for the next millennium, because we think it also has genuine value to collectors," Hassenfeld said.

And for collectors concerned that the onset of Episode I would mean the end of action figures from the original trilogy, think again—Hasbro will introduce the COMMTech chip into the universe of its *Power of the Force* line of classic trilogy figures, beginning this summer. Yup, between Luke, Leia, Vader, young Anakin, and (eventually) Shmi, you can soon hold your

own lively Skywalker family reunion.

In addition to the COMMTech chips—which are also programmed to recognize other characters and recreate entire exchanges of dialogue from Episode I—Hasbro also revealed a new line of playsets and vehicles that up the ante on *Star Wars* play through a series of technological goodies ranging from more digital audio to laser-tag technology for ship-to-ship warfare.

By now, Hasbro's first wave of 35 Episode I figures has hit the shelves, including the big eight—Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon, Anakin, Padmé, Queen Amidala, Jar Jar, Darth Maul, and a battalion of battle droids—as well as new supporting characters such as Watto, Ric Olié, and Boss Nass, and new figures of old favorites Artoo and Threepio. Coming in June: Yoda, Rune Haako, and the Theed Hangar Playset, where you can control Qui-Gon with a joystick as he takes on battle droids (the set includes one battle droid that breaks apart) with his battery-powered "Jedi Power Moves."



«COMMTech READER»

Also on tap from Hasbro: new versions of Darth Maul, Anakin, Queen Amidala, Qui-Gon, and Obi-Wan in July, plus Jabba the Hutt, along with his two-headed alien announcer, in August.

Meanwhile, Hasbro's sister company, Galoob, announced its new slate of *Star Wars* MicroMachines, including upcoming August releases *Royal Starship Repair* (with working doors and lift tubes, not to mention a removable hyperdrive) and the *Deluxe Podracing Playset*, a race-track set that allows for side-by-side competition from two Podracers. Oh, and do the words "Build Your Own Podracer" mean anything to you? Well, if they don't already, chances are they will when Galoob unveils that set in August. ☺

Star Wars CCG Championships Scheduled

Decipher announced recently that it would hold its *Star Wars* Customizable Card Game World Championships for 1999 on November 11-14—combining the competition with the *Star Trek* CCG World Championships and a Decipher Homecoming for what the

SILAS CARSON MANIC MUNDI

by Scott Chernoff



» **He may share many similar traits** with his intergalactic predecessors, but Silas Carson represents the beginning of a new generation of *Star Wars* supporting actors—and not just because he plays three roles in Episode I of the new trilogy.

Whether imparting wisdom as the stoic and blatantly brainy Jedi Ki-Adi-Mundi, cowering to the Sith as the cowardly and deceitful Neimoidian Nute Gunray, or smoothly transporting the Jedi to Naboo as the Republic Cruiser Pilot at the film's start, Carson brings all the classical acting skills, solid theatrical background, and regal British pedigree to his performances that were the hallmark of the English character actors who populated the classic *Star Wars* trilogy.

But while the stodgy Imperial officers and Rebel commanders of *A New Hope* didn't know what to make of the flashy and silly American production around them, the 34-year-old Carson is one of the first supporting actors of the *Star Wars* saga to have grown up in a world dominated by Wookiees and Tusken Raiders.

"I was quite young when they first came out," Carson told the *Insider*. "I wouldn't say that I was a fanatic, but certainly a fan. When the *Special Edition* was released, it was a great chance for me to get the fever again and roll back a lot of very happy memories. But while I wouldn't say that I was a fanatic then, I am now."

No doubt. Now, Carson—in his major motion picture debut, no less—finds himself popping up everywhere in the phenomenon that is *The Phantom Menace*. Not only that, but his third-ranking Jedi Council member persona of Ki-Adi-Mundi has already been spun off as the star of the popular Dark Horse comic book series, *Star Wars: Prelude to Rebellion*. Ki-Adi and Nute both survived the Naboo assault (alas, the same cannot be said of the Republic Cruiser

Pilot), raising the possibility of the actor's return in Episode II or III—although, considering Carson's colossal casting karma, he could even turn up in yet another role. Heck, I wouldn't be surprised if he's stowed away somewhere on the Queen's ship as a hidden fourth character as well.

He played so many parts, in fact, that Carson was one of the rare actors on the set who was given the entire screenplay. "I was able to see the whole story," he said. "I'm one of the lucky ones." Uh, yeah—you can say that again, Silas!

But ironically, while it might appear as though Carson played every role in the movie, he was initially up for just one—and he didn't end up playing it. "Initially, when I met Robin Gurland, who's the casting director, and she introduced me to George, there was another pilot character who ended up not being in the script," he recalled. "But at the time it was kind of a toss-up between doing that and Ki-Adi-Mundi, who was actually the more interesting scene to play, because of course there's Sam Jackson and Frank Oz, and Liam Neeson and Ewan McGregor in that scene."

Once he was cast as Ki-Adi, Carson was sent to ILM's creature shop, where the character's commanding look would be crafted. "Not every actor is able to wear prosthetics and contacts," Carson said. "A lot of people are claustrophobic. I met all of the creature department, and at the time they were casting the Neimoidians as well. They needed people who were very tall, big people for the Neimoidians." Carson is 6'3".

"They had somebody to play Nute Gunray," Carson continued, "but apparently this actor, when they did the test for the prosthetics, couldn't handle it all. Nute was even more uncomfortable than Ki-Adi, given that you're actually inside a mechanical head. By that time, I had spent a lot of time with them, so they said to me, 'Would you like to play this character as well?' Obviously, being disguised, an actor is able to play more than one alien. But it was really being around the set and getting on so well with Robin and George. I think they trusted me."

Carson rewarded their trust by delivering two distinct, nuanced performances, which he capsulized as "Wise and stoic versus cowardly and devious." Playing the two opposites could sometimes provide for a rather manic shooting schedule for the actor. "There were a couple times when I was doing Ki-Adi in the morning, and in the afternoon I'd do Nute, which was interesting," he said. "It's a bit like working in rep in theater—you play one character one day and another character the next."

But even the most highly-trained actor could get thrown by acting in the *Star Wars* universe. "The funniest thing was when I pilot the Jedi ship," Carson said. "At the very beginning, I actually speak to a hologram of Nute Gunray. There I am, asking him permission to land, and I'm speaking to myself!" (The dual performance is something of a *Star Wars* tradition—in *The Empire Strikes Back*, actor Ian Liston played an AT-AT driver firing on a snowspeeder piloted by himself as Rebel hero Wes "Good Shot" Janson.)

Carson's cameo as the *Radiant VII* pilot brought the actor full circle, back to the character for which he originally auditioned. "When



"There were a couple of times when I was doing Ki-Adi in the morning, and in the afternoon, I'd do Nute, which was interesting..."

Robin met me, there was another pilot character with a slightly larger volume of work," Carson said. "He was in several scenes, but that character was written out of the script, so we started to talk about Ki-Adi instead. But I said to Robin, 'I would really like to appear in the film at some point so people could also see my face,' and when the Jedi's pilot came up, they offered it to me."

The actor's triple crown of *Star Wars* characters (already a trilogy's worth) marks the Force-ful arrival of an actor who came seemingly out of nowhere to a seat at the Jedi Council itself. "I'm not one of these people who thought he was going to be an actor from the age of six," Carson said. "I came to it very late. I was 17 years old and studying my A levels, and there was a chance for me to audition for the school musical, *Guys and Dolls*. This was the first time I'd ever been on stage, and I thought I'd go in for it for fun. But the next day I found out that I was cast as the lead."

"It just came at the right time, and I realized that I thoroughly enjoyed doing it," the actor recalled. "It was a complete accident—it was just one of those lucky moments where you find yourself in the middle of something and you think, 'God, I really love this.'"

After graduating from drama school to steady work on the London stage, Carson began to break into television before he found himself in the middle of *Star Wars*. "It's funny working on something like that because as an

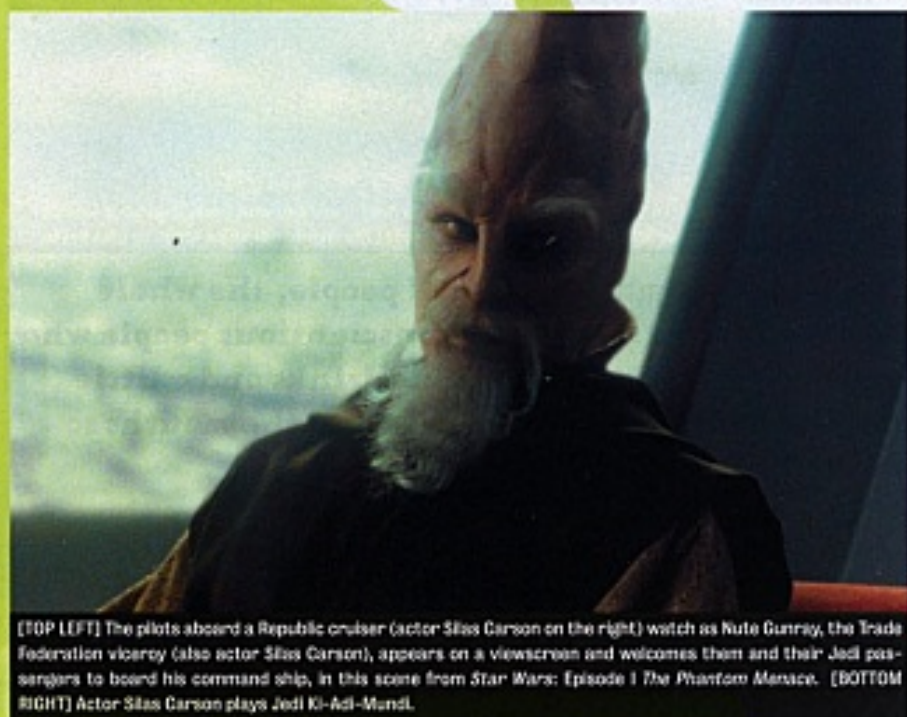
actor, you're meeting all these famous people and working alongside them, but the minute you stop working, they become friends and not working acquaintances, as is the case with any film set," he said. "It wasn't until afterwards, when the thing was being pieced together, that I actually began to realize what it is I had been involved with—this huge enterprise that is a part of everybody's life, everybody in my generation. So in retrospect, it became very exciting, but at the time, I just put my head

down and got on with it."

And it's safe to assume that was a pretty heavy head. "Yeah, Nute was very heavy," he said, "and there's all kinds of wires and batteries and a remote control pack involved. We really couldn't stay for very long in those things. After every take, we would have to sit down and have a rest. It was very strenuous on the back and shoulders. But it was only a question of 15 minutes preparation, because Nute is a state-of-the-art mechanical head. It's kind of like a helmet—it goes over the whole of your head, with prosthetic skin over the top of it, and the eyes and mouth are operated by remote control. So there are these wires and bolts and so on inside. That was just a matter of putting it on and getting the battery pack all linked up."

"But Ki-Adi," he continued, "given that the prosthetics were built onto my face, that was a four-hour job. His skull extends about 12 inches above his face, and that kind of sat on my head. The actual face is made of prosthetics built onto my face, so it's actually me moving. It's a bit like the Emperor in *Return of the Jedi*. The face is extremely light, nice and easy."

So light, in fact, that the actor would often forget he was wearing it. "Once the thing had been built on," Carson recalled, "I would walk around all day with this face on and forget I had it—which was very freaky for other people. I remember having lunch with Sam Jackson and just chatting away to him and forgetting that I looked like this hundred-year-old alien. On the second day, I brought him a photograph of



[TOP LEFT] The pilots aboard a Republic cruiser (actor Silas Carson on the right) watch as Nute Gunray, the Trade Federation viceroy (also actor Silas Carson), appears on a viewscreen and welcomes them and their Jedi passengers to board his command ship, in this scene from *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. [BOTTOM RIGHT] Actor Silas Carson plays Jedi Ki-Adi-Mond.



Darth Maul (played by martial arts expert Ray Park) walks through Theed city with Trade Federation Viceroy Nute Gunray (played by actor Silas Carson) in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. Photo by Giles Keyte.

"We had this amazing team of people, the whole creature department, very conscientious people who would provide us with isotonic drinks and a little vacuum pump that pumped air into the mouths so we could breathe."

myself, and he said, 'Oh my God, the way you move, you're like an old man!'"

Carson said Ki-Adi's convincing appearance helped him find the key to discovering the character. "It's really a question of getting to know the design," he said. "I spent a long

time looking at all the pictures, and watching the creators come up with the final design. I could see what kind of man he was. He had this beautiful, wise, old face—much older than me. So I set about, first of all, imagining his physicality. I studied older people, and started to

Actor Silas Carson, inside a heavy mask and costume he uses in his role as the Neimoidian Nute Gunray, gets some cool air between shots on location at the Caserta Palace in Italy. Photo by Keith Hampshire



look at the way in which they moved—much more slowly and much more deliberately, partly because of their age, but I think also with Ki-Adi because he's a very wise old soul. I created an older person's voice, so he speaks more slowly and deliberately—he doesn't waste his words."

But communicating from within the hulking Nute Gunray costume, on the other hand, wasn't something they taught in drama school. "You could see through these tiny slits in the eyes," Carson said. "It's very impaired vision. The whole thing was very claustrophobic. There was no air inside there. But we had this amazing team of people, the whole creature department, very conscientious people who would provide us with isotonic drinks and a little vacuum pump that pumped air into the mouths so we could breathe. This was the first time they'd ever used this stuff. Plus, the costumes are great, long, flowing cloaks—three or four of them—and hats on top as well, so the whole thing weighed a great deal."

The physically challenging conditions meant Carson had to approach his acting from a new direction. "Creating the characters was completely different," he said. "The way I tackled it was to make the characters very physically different. You know, you have to be conscious of the way your body reads. With Nute, he's a coward basically, a vicious coward. So there had to be lots of cringing and stooping and bowing, but you have to exaggerate these things because you're in this huge costume."

"It's rather like Anthony Daniels—he made C-3PO so perfect because of his physical movements apart from the voice. The physical movements were definitely him. You have to think much more about the physicality of the character, because your facial movements and so forth are not read in the way they normally are."

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 81

universal

Mother

by Annika Gustafsson

No matter where in the galaxy you call home, there is a place for you in the *Star Wars* universe—at least that was the first lesson learned by acclaimed Swedish actress Pernilla August when she showed up at Leavesden Studios in London to play Shmi Skywalker, mother of the young boy who will become Darth Vader, in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*.

At the beginning of the shoot, August was nervous about acting in a foreign language. But George Lucas helped her get over the problem. "He just told me that Shmi Skywalker earlier in the story had come from another galaxy, a Swedish one," she laughed. "Shmi was allowed to have an accent. After that, I could throw away my anxiety and feel relaxed and at ease with the situation."

August credited Lucas with establishing that relaxing atmosphere. "Like other great directors, George Lucas has the ability to create a warm and generous atmosphere, which makes you as an actor feel confident and safe," August said during an interview in her native Swedish. "I liked every minute of the work."

Although she is an experienced actress, well-known for her work on several occasions for legendary director Ingmar Bergman both on stage and in films, *Episode I* marks the first time Pernilla August has been cast in an international movie. In 1991 and 1992, however, she had small parts in two episodes of the TV series *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* directed by her former husband, Danish Oscar-winner Bille August.

Although it was her *Young Indy* work that established her as a front-runner for the crucial role of Shmi Skywalker, the busy actress admitted that, at first, the TV roles were just like any other job. "Actually, I don't remember very much of those roles," she said. "Once I was a German woman, another time an Italian one. Accepting the parts was more or less a way of keeping the family together. Our first daughter was not even one year old."

But the ordinary job grew extraordinary when August ran into *Young Indy* and *Episode I* producer Rick McCallum one fateful day in February, 1997, at the International Berlin Film Festival. "He is a marvelous person, warm, friendly and easy to work with," August recalled. "I was pleased to meet him again."

She was even more pleased when, later that spring, with her surprise meeting still fresh in McCallum's mind, August received the offer to fly to London to test for the part of Shmi Skywalker. For her screen-test, she played opposite no less than Liam Neeson, whom she said was greatly supportive. On her way back home to Sweden, while shopping at Heathrow Airport in London, August received a call from McCallum on her cellular phone, thanking her for her screen-test performance. Then he popped the question: could she take the part?

"I just screamed with joy," she remembered. "This was one of the most fantastic moments of my life, and everything was absolutely top secret. I bought some bottles of champagne to celebrate with my mother and best girlfriend when I arrived in Sweden."

But August was concerned about delivering her English dialogue convincingly. That's why she said she was happy to discover that George Lucas had set aside ample time for rehearsals. After all, filming in your own language permits you to improvise if you forget a line or two. But for August, who is not fluent in English, that wasn't possible.

She was also happy to discover that there



"I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO SHOW OUR CHILDREN THIS BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL WHERE THE GOOD TRIUMPHS OVER AND OVER AGAIN"

Good and Evil



were no negative personalities around the set to make her feel uncomfortable in her linguistic challenge. "There were hundreds of people on the team," August recalled. "Still, I didn't notice any difference compared with being on smaller productions as far as basic acting in front of the camera is concerned. Everybody seemed very much down to earth."

It was a pleasant initiation into the Star Wars universe—especially considering that August, who was in drama school in Stockholm from 1979 through 1982, didn't get around to seeing the original Star Wars trilogy until the Special Edition made its way to Europe in the summer of 1997, when she took her then 12-year-old daughter to Star Wars.

"Almost everyone in the audience seemed to have a relation to the characters in the story," she recalled. "When Harrison Ford turned up on the screen, people stood up cheering him."

Now that she's a part of the legend, August said she is happy to be in a film where the central theme is a classical one, like in old fairy tales. "I think it's important to show our children this battle between good and evil where the good triumphs over and over again," she emphasized. "Besides, the humor attracts me. I couldn't resist an offer like this from George Lucas, but of course everything gets even better when you can agree with the message of the story."

August said the mythological content in the Star Wars saga pointed the way for her

interpretation of the role. She said she sees Darth Vader's mother as "The Mother"—the original earth mother, although Shmi and Anakin (played by Jake Lloyd) live in a galaxy far, far away.

But in addition to her work mastering the nuances of the part, August also had to learn to respond to elements that would be digitally dropped into the finished film, an experience which was entirely new for her. "A couple of times I had to look in a certain direction, pretending that I saw some strange creatures flying by," she remembered. "Another time, Jake and I sat on a special wood construction which moved. In the movie we'll be riding on something, but I don't know what it's called."

Seeing just what that "something" will be is just one of the reasons August is eager to see the completed version of Episode I. Although she spent nearly four weeks shooting the movie in London and Tunisia during the summer of 1997, she said, "I have no idea how much of my scenes will stay in the film when they cut it."

But whatever the final film looks like, August said she's delighted to be a part of it—and to be perhaps the first classical Swedish actress with an action figure made in her



[LEFT] Shmi Skywalker (played by actress Pernilla August) listens to her son Anakin, in their hovel on the planet Tatooine in this scene from Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace. **[RIGHT]** from top to bottom: August as Shmi in Episode I; stealing a kiss in 1997's The Best Intentions; guest starring in a 1991 episode of Lucasfilm's Young Indiana Jones Chronicles.



"IF I'M CONCENTRATED ENOUGH WITH THE RIGHT THOUGHTS INSIDE ME, THE ACTING WILL COME INTUITIVELY."

likeness. "I love it," she says with a big laugh of prospects for Shmi toys. "It's great fun and at last I'll be able to turn up double in front of my youngest daughters, something I have been wanting to do now and then!"

Of course, the working mother, who now plays one of cinema's most famous mothers, has extensive experience working with children, most notably in *Fanny and Alexander*, Ingmar Bergman's 1982 family epic, which was awarded four Oscars. Bergman wrote the role of Maj, the red-haired and limping young maid, mistress of the master of the house, especially for August. It was her breakthrough. With this charming, highly acclaimed performance, Pernilla August was suddenly a name in Swedish films.

"I was only 19 at the time and scared to death," August admitted. "Not only of Bergman himself but also because of all the other experienced, highly esteemed Bergman actors. But Ingmar protected me. Besides, he started the filming in a brilliant way. We began with a scene where Maj takes part in a pillow fight in

[LEFT] Shmi Skywalker (played by actress Pernilla August) wishes her son Anakin (played by actor Jake Lloyd) good luck prior to the dangerous Boonta Eve Podrace in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. **[RIGHT]** from top to bottom: Pernilla strolls the fields of Sweden, and picks some flowers, in *The Best Intentions*, and as Shmi Skywalker in *The Phantom Menace*.

the children's bedroom. All my nervousness disappeared. I remember myself often thinking—isn't it more difficult than this? And what fun!" *Fanny and Alexander* was Bergman's farewell to directing for the screen. But he wrote two more screenplays with Pernilla August in mind. In both *Best Intentions* (1992), directed by Bille August, and *Private Confessions* (1996), directed by Liv Ullmann, the woman she plays, Anna, is loosely based on Bergman's own mother. Clearly, there's something about Pernilla August that's quickly making her into the archetypal movie mother.

Best Intentions won the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival in 1993, and August was awarded the best actress prize. But despite all the accolades, August said she sees her work as an exploration and a journey, both joyful and painful, deep into the soul of a woman. In fact, she said that focusing on the awards and the surrounding fame of movie acting will only diminish her performance. "I try to go for a neutral state of mind up until the moment the camera rolls," she said. "If I'm concentrated enough with the right thoughts inside me, the acting will come intuitively."

It was this inner clarity that helped August through another difficult role in Bille August's 1996 *Jerusalem*, in which Pernilla played the strong, religious woman Karin, who sets up a religious colony in the Holy Land. To

prepare for the part, the actress started by asking her mother for old photos once belonging to her great-grandmother. "That first period is really exciting and one of the best parts of the work," she said. "One idea leads to the next. I daydream about my character in order to find out what's motivating her in her different decisions."

August herself has been motivated to perform since she began

acting in amateur theater in her home town of Stockholm as a child. After graduating from drama college she moved to Gävle, a small town in the province, where a brilliant young director, Peter Oskarson, surrounded himself with some of the most talented stage actors in Sweden to form a new ensemble. Over the next few years, August paid her dues in important plays like Chekov's *Three Sisters* and Strindberg's *The Dreamplay*.

In 1986, she returned to Stockholm and the Royal Dramatic Theatre, where Ingmar Bergman directs. She was a memorable Ophelia opposite Peter Stormare (*Fargo*) in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and drew raves as Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

After living with Bille August in Copenhagen, Denmark for three years, Pernilla decided last summer to take a few years off from the theatre in Stockholm and moved with her three daughters to the countryside and coastal landscape in southernmost Sweden. Copenhagen is nearby, and one of her future projects in Denmark involves playing Ulrike Meinhof, one of the leaders of the German terrorist organization the Red Army Faction.

But no matter how many diverse and important roles August is asked to play, few will mean as much to as many people as her current incarnation of Shmi Skywalker, mother of Anakin, grandmother to Luke and Leia, and in many ways the woman who gave birth to a Rebellion. In any language, that's a distinction that, as Shmi's son Darth Vader himself might say, is impressive... most impressive. ☺



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Help defend the Republic and protect the Queen with this heroic lightsaber that has real lights and sound.

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WTY9010 \$12.00



WTY2008 JAR JAR BINKS

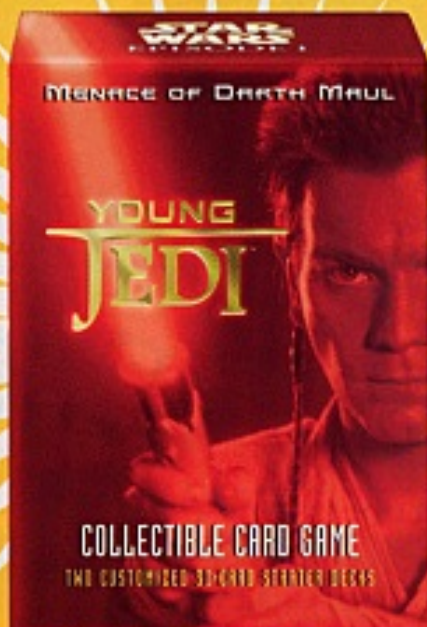


WTY2009 WATTO

EPISODE I PLUSH DOLLS

Squeezably soft! Dolls have plush exterior and polyester fill. Each doll measures 14" tall.

\$20.00 each



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Feel the Force flow through you as you defend that which is good and true. The young Jedi collectible card game is easy to learn and fun to collect. Starter set has 60 cards that help you learn the game.

WCG4015 Starter Deck \$10.00



ELECTRONIC GALACTIC CHESS

Strategy is the word on this Episode I electronic playing field. This chess game is great for beginners and experts alike. Set includes 421 levels of play, a teaching system, large LCD display, 5 styles of play, and many other goodies! Plastic chess pieces represent the good and evil sides from Episode I. Requires 4 AA batteries, not included.

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GUNGAN SUB

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NABOO FIGHTER >>

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WTY4040 \$99.00

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LIGHTSABER DUEL

<< LIGHTSABER DUEL

There are always two; the master and the apprentice. Recreate some of the most exciting Episode I action around with the lightsaber duel set! Includes 50 pieces and comes with Qui-Gon Jinn and Darth Maul figures. Appropriate for ages 6-10.

WTY4033 \$8.00

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WTY4035 \$15.00

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WTY4034 \$12.00



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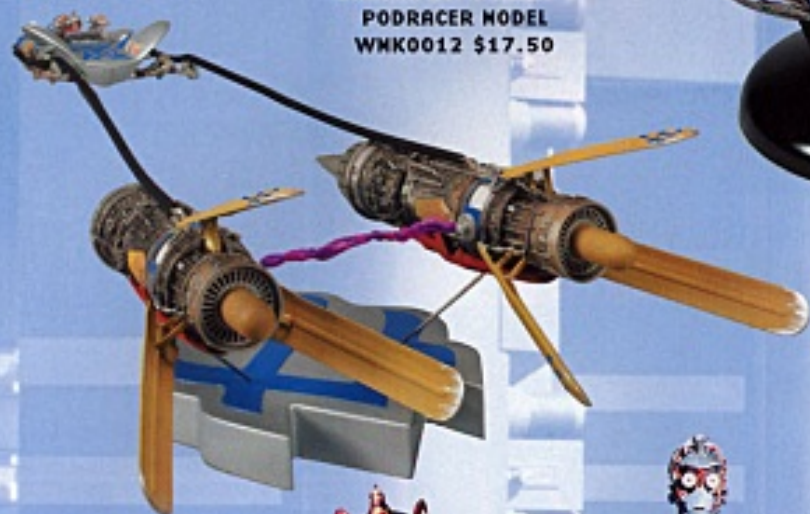
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The renowned Don Post Studios bring you these meticulous, refined replicas from Episode I. Masks are made of latex. Some pieces are preformed, foam filled, or plastics. Masks and helmets are very popular items. Plan early for your next party!

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Put together your own Episode I universe with these kits from ERTL/AMT. Models vary in skill level and piece count. Snap Kits are designed for the beginning modeler. Skill level 2, or higher kits are more complicated and glue is required for assembly. Glue and paint are not included.

**ANAKIN SKYWALKER'S
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**QUEEN AMIDALA
STAND-UP: WFG1021
TALKING: WFG1021T**



**C-3PO
STAND-UP: WFG1027
TALKING: WFG1027T**



**DARTH MAUL
STAND-UP: WFG1025
TALKING: WFG1025T**



**BATTLE DROID
STAND-UP: WFG1028
TALKING: WFG1028T**



**JAR JAR BINKS
STAND-UP: WFG1024
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EPISODE I LIFE-SIZE STAND-UPS

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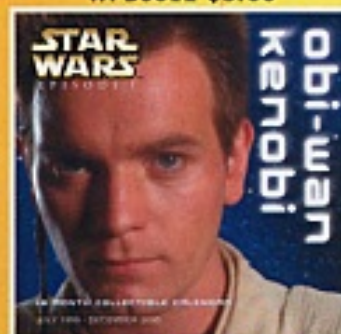
WPL0029 OBI-WAN KENOBI



WPL0027 PODRACE



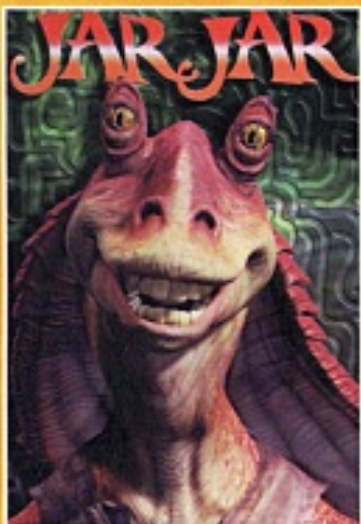
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OBI-WAN KENOBI
WPB0009 \$5.00



WPL0025 QUEEN AMIDALA



WPL0026 JAR JAR



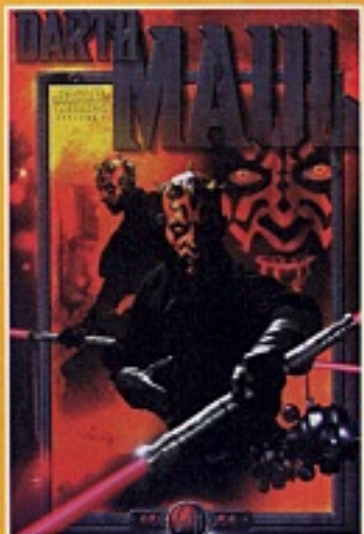
WPL0028 SPACE BATTLE



JAR JAR BINKS
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WPL0023 JEDI BATTLE



WPL0024 DARTH MAUL



DARTH MAUL
WPB0010 \$5.00

EPISODE I POSTERS

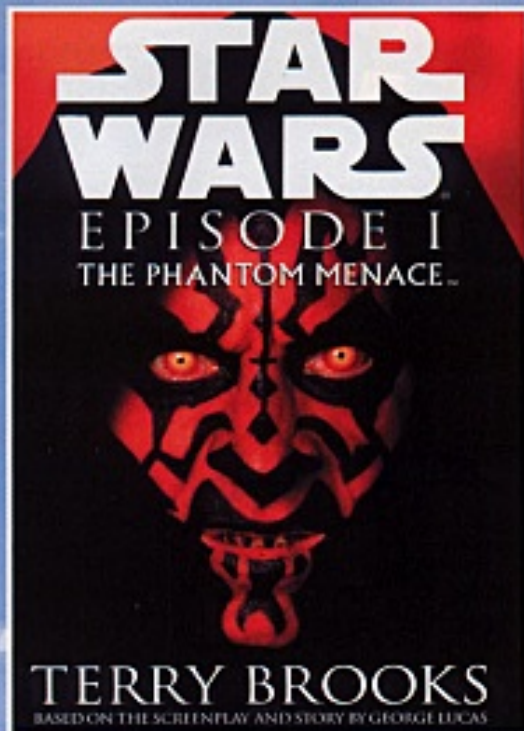
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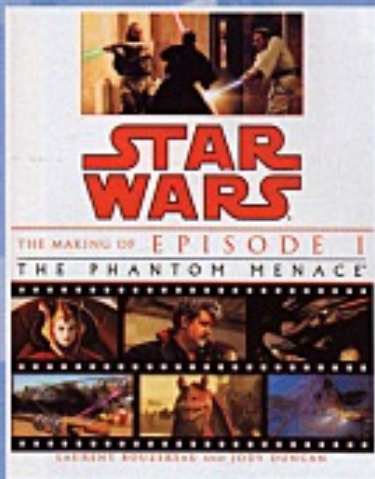
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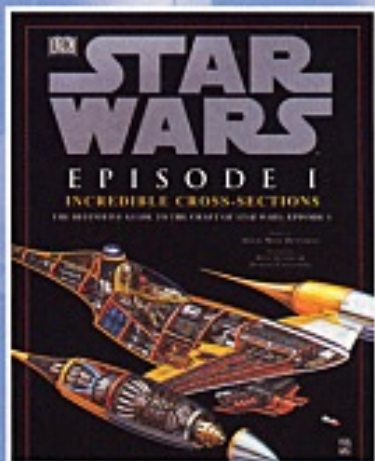
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At the beach, or in your bath, these 100% cotton beach towels are the soft, absorbent side of the Force. Towels feature rich colors and each one pictures a different character from Episode I. Beach towel is 60" long and 30" wide.

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Purple embroidery surrounds the red Darth Maul logo placed across the chest of this polyester mesh sports shirt. An embroidered Darth Maul face is on the left side. *Star Wars: Episode I* is embroidered on the left sleeve above two sporty red stripes. Shirts are designed to be roomy. A comfortable and stylish design for the fashion minded Sith.

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WCL3005XL X-LARGE
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WCL3007LG LARGE
WCL3007XL X-LARGE
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WAC0021 \$20.00



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Each watch features a hand-buffed, silver-finished cover. Pop it open to reveal a vertical, digital time display. Handsome leather bands have unique embossed finishes. Each watch comes with a collectible brushed metal tin for easy display and storage.

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Formal wear for those important Jedi ceremonies... and staff meetings. Show everyone that you possess a bit of the Force with the Episode I ties. Ties are washable.



DARTH MAUL PROBE DROID POCKETWATCH

Darth Maul pocketwatch. Pop it open and red lights flash. Darth Maul says "At last we will have revenge."

WAC 0014 \$39.00



ANAKIN COMPASS WATCH

Know where you are and how long it will take you to get where you're going with this Episode I compass watch. Watch includes compass dial with easy to read markings that will help you find your destiny. Battery operated.

WAC 0010 \$27.00



QUEEN AMIDALA SILK SCARF

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by Scott Chernoff

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There are all kinds of ways to put down on paper the awesomeness of John Williams' career—the five Oscars (and 37 nominations); the 17 Grammys (44 nominations); the two Emmys; the fact that he's composed the scores for six of the 10 top grossing movies of all time.

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But chief among Williams' stirring and most memorable music are the classic themes he has composed for the *Star Wars* saga: the foreboding attack of Darth Vader's theme (the Imperial March); Princess Leia's theme, which mirrors her character's dignity and beauty; the thrilling rush of "The Asteroid Field"; the wholly

original, funky swing of the Cantina band, the most rocking intergalactic bar band in film history; the victorious splendor of the "The Throne Room"; Yoda's theme, as subtle and grand (and contradictory) as the Jedi Master himself; and, of course, the triumphant and heroic crescendo of the Main Title theme, that supercharged burst of feeling that makes our blood rush, our hearts pound and our spirits swell every time we begin that journey to a galaxy far, far away.

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Indeed, with so much memorable music springing from the mind of one man, Williams' abilities and output as a composer and conductor are analogous to that of Lucas and Steven Spielberg as directors—so it makes sense he hooked up with both of them. Williams has composed music for every feature film Spielberg has ever directed except one (*The Color Purple*, which was scored by acclaimed composer Quincy Jones, also one of

the film's producers), from the young director's debut *The Sugarland Express* in 1974 right through Williams' recent Oscar-nominated score for 1998's *Saving Private Ryan*.

But while Williams has gained worldwide fame for his work with Spielberg and Lucas, the composer/conductor has had such a successful and diverse career in music that even without his Force-ful collaborators, he'd still be one of the most popular and admired musical artists of our day. The Long Island, New York, native, now 67, is the son of a successful jazz drummer and started his career in the U.S. Air Force—conducting and writing music for Air Force bands, and going on to study piano at Julliard School of Music in New York.

After Julliard, Johnny Williams (as he was known then) started playing live in New York jazz clubs, and soon began composing music and conducting orchestras for live television shows, including the classic *Playhouse 90*. Before long, Williams was all over the TV music scene—playing the bass line for Henry Mancini's classic *Peter Gunn* theme, and scoring episodes of *The Mod Squad*, *Lost in Space*, *Wagon Train*, and even *Gilligan's Island* (no, not the theme—but a lot of the other incidental music you remember and secretly cherish).

After playing in orchestras for greats like Bernard Herrmann (*Psycho*), Alfred Newman (who composed the famous Fox fanfare), and Jerry Goldsmith (who would later score many of the *Star Trek* movies), Williams began composing and conducting film scores himself, beginning with the 1959 teen flick *Daddy-O*. Early

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

company is calling "a mega-event."

In addition, Decipher has revamped its qualification system to give players more chances to win seats at the Championships than ever before. For more information on the event as it unfolds, check out the Decipher Web site at www.decipher.com (and check out our coverage of last year's championships in *Insider* #43). ☐

Lucas Establishes USC Digital Studio

Honoring one of his most important influences while also giving back to his film school alma mater, George Lucas donated \$1.5 million in March to the University of Southern California (USC) to create a digital studio on the film school's Los Angeles campus. The new studio will be named after the late Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa, who passed away last year. Kurosawa's films, including *The Hidden Fortress*, made a strong impact on Lucas when he was studying films at USC

and first crafting the *Star Wars* saga.

"Kurosawa was one of film's true greats," Lucas said. "His ability to transform a vision into a powerful work of art is unparalleled—so it seemed appropriate to name the new digital studio for him. This way, we pay tribute to Kurosawa while at the same time inspiring students to break new ground the way he did."

The new high-tech studio will grant students access to digital stages with motion-control computers; non-linear digital editing and shooting systems—at least 60 individual editing stations; CGI classrooms and multimedia cable connections; a state-of-the-art screening room; digital sound editing equipment; and digital compositing equipment. The Kurosawa Stage will be located in the university's new Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts, currently under construction following a \$5 million donation from director Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*, *Back to the Future*).

"With this gift, George Lucas continues to demonstrate his heart-

felt support of young filmmaking talent at USC," said USC Film School dean Elizabeth Daley. "It's especially gratifying to see his name paired with Robert Zemeckis—both of them are masters of experimentation, and both are genuinely invested in helping the next generation continue to push the envelope." ☐

George Lucas, Journalist

When *Star Wars* creator George Lucas was a kid, he wrote and published his own neighborhood newspaper, staking an early claim as a communicator. In February, the filmmaker took a little time off from finishing Episode I to don his writer's hat again, penning an article in the February, 1999, issue of *Premiere* magazine about the barrier-breaking potential of the digital filmmaking era.

Headlined "The Future of Film," the two-page article was part of the magazine's "Y2K" issue. In the piece, Lucas addressed his frustration with the limits he faced on the

first *Star Wars* trilogy. "I could imagine these characters, but I couldn't realize them," he wrote. "It took a lot of effort and talent on the part of many people to manipulate the puppets, latex, and remote-control systems that allowed us to create these creatures. Even then I was unable to move them around to any significant degree."

And he had this to say to naysayers who complain that digital animation "doesn't look real": "Well, that's one thing you can depend on: film is not real," Lucas wrote. ☐



STAR SIGHTINGS

The Skywalkers are busy lately: **MARK HAMILL** (Luke Skywalker) will be *Walking Across Egypt*; the film also stars Ellen Burstyn and Jonathan Taylor Thomas. ... **JAMES EARL JONES** (Darth Vader's voice) stars with Lynn Redgrave in *The Annihilation of Fish*. ... and **JAKE LLOYD** (Anakin) appeared on NBC's *The Pretender* in February. ...

Another Jedi, **SAMUEL L. JACKSON** (Mace Windu) has signed to reprise the classic role of Shaft in a remake of that 1971 "blacksploitation" blockbuster, to be directed by John Singleton (*Boyz n the Hood*, *Rosewood*). ... Jackson, who recently hosted ESPN's ESPY Awards, was also named Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals Society man of the year in February, joining the ranks of Robert De Niro and **HARRISON FORD**. ...

CARRIE FISHER (Princess Leia) voiced the part of the title character's ex-wife on Comedy Central's *Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist*. ... **JOHN RATZENBERGER** (Major Derlin) appears with Martin Sheen in *Lucky Town*. ... **GEORGE LUCAS** appeared at the Grammy Awards in February. ...

ROGER CHRISTIAN, who shared an art direction Oscar for *Star Wars* and directed the second unit on *The Phantom Menace*, will direct John Travolta in the sci-fi

adventure *Battlefield Earth*. ... **PHIL TIPPETT**, the stop-and-go-motion puppetry wizard of the classic *Star Wars* trilogy, is creating visual effects for *The Haunting of Hill House*, which (as previously reported here) stars **LIAM NEESON**. ...

DENNIS MUREN (a Lucasfilm Lifer who most recently served as an effects supervisor on Episode I) will receive his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on June 3, 1999, in Hollywood, California. Cheers, Dennis! ... Muren will also be appearing with his fellow *Phantom Menace* effects artists **ROB COLEMAN**, **JOHN KNOLL**, and **SCOTT SQUIRES** at the Visual Effects Society's VES '99: A Festival of Visual Effects, June 4-6 in North Hollywood, California, where they will discuss their work on Episode I. ... **ILM** is working on *The Mummy*, *Galaxy Quest*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Wild Wild West*, and Martin Scorsese's *Bringing Out the Dead*, with Nicolas Cage. ...

And last but certainly not least, congratulations to **GARY RYDSTROM** and his team from **SKYWALKER SOUND** for their Oscars for their work on *Saving Private Ryan*. Rydstrom won Best Sound along with **GARY SUMMERS**, **ANDY NELSON**, and **RONALD JUDKINS**, and Rydstrom also won Best Sound Effects Editing with **RICHARD HYMNS**. Congratulations, guys—and thanks for the great work on Episode I! ☐

NEWS EXTRA!

As we went to press, LucasArts released these exciting images from *Star Wars Episode I Insider's Guide* and the first two *Star Wars* prequel video games: *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace* (for PlayStation and PC), and *Star Wars: Episode I Racer* (for Nintendo 64, PC, PlayStation, and Macintosh). Wizard! ☐

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Photo by Jonathan Fisher

films included such non-epics as *Gidget Goes to Rome* and the Audrey Hepburn vehicle *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, as well as arranging Andre Previn's music in 1967's *Valley of the Dolls*.

But then Williams won his first Academy Award, for adapting the music to the Broadway hit *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1971 (Star Wars was his third Oscar), marking the first turning-point in a career that hasn't stopped spiraling upward since. The recognition led him to score two early films for director Robert Altman (*Images* and *The Long Goodbye*), as well as Alfred Hitchcock's last film (*Family Plot*) and two of producer/director Irwin Allen's blockbuster disaster pictures: *The Poseidon Adventure* and *The Towering Inferno*.

Since joining forces with Spielberg and then Lucas in the mid-'70s, Williams served as the supremely popular conductor of the Boston Pops from 1980-1993, releasing some 50 albums with the orchestra (he continues to keep up a rigorous live touring schedule). In addition to his recent work with Spielberg (including bulls-eyes like *Jurassic Park* and *Schindler's List*, both in 1993), Williams has scored a string of successful films including *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Far and Away*, *Seven Years in Tibet*, *Presumed Innocent* with Harrison Ford, last year's *Stepmom*, the first two *Home Alone* movies, and three films for Oliver Stone (*Born on the Fourth of July*, *Nixon*, and *JFK*), as well as the themes for NBC News, the Dreamworks and Amblin logos, and the 1984, '88, and '96 Olympic Games.

The artist returned to Lucas' galaxy in 1997, when he composed new music for the revised finale of the *Return of the Jedi* Special Edition. But by and large, Williams' Star Wars experience the last 16 years has been limited to performing the original music in concert for audiences around the world. All that changed

last fall, however, when the director showed Williams his rough cut of *The Phantom Menace*, and Williams immersed himself back into the world of Jedi and Jawas, pouring out a monumental new score, with echoes of his classic Star Wars music, for Episode I.

The *Insider* caught up with the composer shortly after he finished conducting the London Symphony Orchestra at Britain's historic Abbey Road Studios (of Beatles fame) for the recording

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of his *Phantom Menace* score. Williams was eager to talk about his new music for Star Wars—and we were more than eager to listen.

You just finished conducting the Episode I score—how does it feel returning to the Star Wars universe after all this time?

I wondered how I would feel after such a long time when I started to work. But then I found out after a day or two of getting back into it that it's sort of like riding a bicycle—you get right with it and fall immediately back in step with the process. Seeing the film and having meetings with George early on, at the end of last year, got the mood back up, and I was surprised at how easily and comfortably I made the transition from 10, those many years ago, to the present opportunity that the new film offers.

Did your return to the Skywalker saga bring back any memories of working on the classic trilogy?

Well, I suppose these are general life

observations, but you ask yourself, "Where did all the years slip by? It seems like only yesterday we were doing Darth Vader and Yoda." This film is so unlike all the others that one does, in the sense that it's always with us. In the 20 years or so since I started working on these, I've done hundreds of concerts around the world playing the original Star Wars music. That music is certainly in my repertoire—and a number of other conductors' too—so it's material that we all know, something that's with us all the time.

I got an enormous kick out of the London Symphony Orchestra when we started recording *The Phantom Menace* a few weeks ago in London. We played the original Main Title music for the film, which of course starts all of them, and the orchestra played the music like a very old friend. It's a piece of standard repertoire now. It's so gratifying to me to hear them sit down and play it—every fingering, every bowing, every aspect of articulation is something they've been doing for years. I've done the piece in concert with them countless times. So in that sense, it's almost as though we've never left Star Wars, musically.

What is the most challenging aspect of scoring a new Star Wars movie?

These films are enormously demanding and difficult. *The Phantom Menace* has 120 minutes—that's two full hours—of music. And the music is very dense and very active, because it's all on an operatic scale. George always says that Star Wars is like a silent movie, and it really is: the music underscores all the emotion, but also the action and all the choreography of it, the starship whirlings and lightsaber fights. I couldn't imagine how many thousands of notes there are in every minute of music—I've never computed it myself. When you confront the need to create that volume of music in the weeks that we have to do it, it's a daunting and challenging task physically, just getting the notes on paper.

Then the challenge extends to creating material that is fresh and new, but that also would have some connection and relationship to the old material in texture and thematic style. So the challenges musically are great: to

produce that much music, and to wed it and forge it into an existing body of work that's familiar to the world public now. It's a big responsibility, and a daunting challenge.

Having worked on *Star Wars* before, you must have had a pretty good idea what you were in for.

It's become pretty routine with George. He relies, as you know, very heavily on music—which is wonderful for me. It couldn't be a better opportunity or forum to present music. That challenge, and that opportunity, has always been there with George.

Was there anything that surprised you, then, about this film?

The film contains a lot of surprising and ingenious new effects and characters, but the working process with George and the orchestra is very much the same as with the first three films. The technology of what George is able to do visually has expanded and developed enormously over the last 20 years, due to his special effects studies and work. But where the music is concerned, it's still symphonic and in the same theatrical tradition that's been with us for a couple hundred years now.

I still use a pencil and paper as a tool to write the music. I don't write it on a computer. It's all hand-written. It's all acoustically played by the orchestra. We do use some synthesizers, but only as adjuncts to the acoustical material and the orchestra. So while there were a lot of surprises visually, the method of working for composers is quite a classical one.

In the classic trilogy, most of the main characters had their own musical themes. Did you create new themes for the characters of Episode I, and how do you go about choosing a piece of music that fits a particular character?

We've got a lot of familiar themes from the first three films, but almost all the music in *Phantom Menace* is new. There are a handful of musical quotes of the earlier films—the Force theme, Yoda's theme, and Darth Vader's theme—but single quotes, very brief. The main opportunity, the main challenge, was to create new melodic material that offers melodic identification to the new characters, just in the way we've always done it.

The character Jar Jar has his own music, and of course Anakin has a theme—if you listen very carefully, you will hear hints of what's

to become of him in later incarnations. There are musical clues one can pick up. The music is new, but it does incorporate some references in a couple instances to other characters we know.

Then there's some entirely new material for characters like Darth Maul, and there's a theme for Anakin's mother, and a theme for the Queen. The invading droid army has a march of their own. So this theme book of *Star Wars*, if you like, seems to grow and swell as George continues to introduce new creatures to the menagerie.

Do you come into a new movie with preconceived ideas, or do you wait to watch the film and then see what hits you?

I always prefer not to read the script and not to have any preconceptions when I come into a room to look at a film, because that way I get the same set of fresh reactions and objective first-time responses to the film that the audience will have. If I don't know what's happening next, I can get a sense of how well George has surprised us.

You can never get that reaction quite as effectively if you go in with a preconception, having read the script and having the knowledge of what is happening next. So I rely very much on that first impression I get when I run the film with George, and I keep that with me on the weeks that I write the music. That first reaction—that first clear, fresh objective reaction—is enormously effective for me.

You wrote a beautiful choral passage for Episode I, unlike other music in the classic trilogy. What inspired that piece?

The inspiration always with these things would be the film itself, and the characters within it. There's a very prominent choral piece in *Phantom Menace*, which we hadn't had before, and which we will use for the end credits.

But I was looking at the soon-to-be-famous duel between Darth Maul and Qui-Gon, and it occurred to me that it might be wonderful to have voices doing that, too. I wanted to find a text that would offer vowel sounds, which is really the so-called "noise" that a chorus will make. We can't ever fully understand when a chorus sings the words, and in a dramatic sense it's not important that we know the words, just that a chorus has a certain kind of sound.

But I found an ancient Celtic text, called "The Battle of the Trees." There's a stanza which in English is, "Under the tongue root a fight most



Photos by Jonathan Fisher

dread, while another rages behind in the head." The symbolism in the poetry is that the trees become animated and they become the warriors in the battle, and at the end of the battle the Druid priest freezes them back into tree form. I thought it was a spooky text which I could use to establish this ritual, almost religious feeling in that duel, almost as though they were fighting the duel in a church, as a ritual—less a battle than some religious rite of passage.

I had a translator put the text into a couple old languages—Celtic didn't work because it didn't have the vowels that we needed, and Greek and Latin were not remote enough. So I had it put into Sanskrit, and we're using the Sanskrit words just as syllables, to intone the words "Dreaded fight that's here or lingering

LEFT: Director George Lucas and composer John Williams discuss the score during the recording session at London's Abbey Road Studios. **ABOVE:** John Williams once again takes up the baton to conduct the London Symphony Orchestra in his score for *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*.

the head." That gives us a kind of choral, pagan, quasi-religious texture to what we see and feel during that fight. The piece ["Duel of the Fates"] really describes a force of destiny or a force of the fates, a force that's unstoppable, like the Force that George talks about—the aspects of good and evil in all things and all people.

There's also a victory parade that has a children's chorus at the end of the film—it doesn't have text, but it's done with children's vocal sounds and laughing, and animal sounds and birds, all in a musical context. So there's quite a cornucopia of musical materials in the film that are new.

Can you tell us a little bit about the nature of your collaboration with George Lucas? You two must have a rather intuitive process after all these years.

It's pretty smooth. What normally happens is that George will show me the film in a rough state, because he typically would not have all of his special effects finished. And he usually talks me through it. He will talk through all the scenes and tell me what he's trying to achieve emotionally or rhythmically, or dynamically—and in pretty simple terms, like *loud*, *soft*, *fast*, *slow*, *melodic*, *non-melodic*, etc.

His ideas are very general, but they can be a very good preliminary guideline for me. Then I go off and work alone for the next eight weeks or however much time I have to do it, and we meet again on the scoring stage.

So the first time Lucas hears your music is when you meet to record it?

We've just had very good luck together. I mean, we haven't misread each other or misunderstood each other in terms of our intentions or our tastes, or what our objectives are. It's been a very smooth working relationship all through these years. It's been very comfortable and amicable, all of it. There are shared artistic goals on which we seem to both come together and meet very, very harmoniously.

This might be impossible to answer, but do you have a favorite piece of music from any of the *Star Wars* films?

That is a difficult question. I always loved playing "The Imperial March," and I love playing Princess Leia's music, and Yoda's. I think we'll enjoy doing Anakin's music and the choral piece from this one in concerts this summer. I've had a lot personal gratification in the fact that I've been able to take the music out of the film and play the pieces for the public, and

sense how much they enjoy this after they've had the experience of knowing the films and knowing the characters.

You've created so many scores that have become just as iconic as the films themselves—*Jaws*, *Superman*, *Close Encounters*, *E.T.*, the *Indiana Jones* films, and of course the *Star Wars* saga, to name but a few. Are there any other scores that stand out in your mind, scores which might have been overlooked or made for films that were overlooked?

Well, there are some things going back quite a few years. I did a score for a film called *The Relvers* [1969], which had Steve McQueen in it. I was always quite proud of that little score—and happy about it, because it was the score that brought me to Steven Spielberg's attention. He liked the score from *Relvers* very much, and he used it as an inspiration when he wrote his scripts, so I have a place in my heart for *The Relvers* because it brought me together with Steven, and of course Steven is the one who brought me together with George Lucas. So that was a kind of seminal link.

Another score was *Jane Eyre*, which was a television production I did in London years ago, but music I've enjoyed playing in concerts over the years, and the audiences have also responded. Robert Altman's *Images* was another one that sticks out in my mind, which I did quite a few years ago and has some unusual music I still find some interest in. There are others—*Close Encounters* with Spielberg has always been something that I remember.

Is there a difference between orchestral scores for movies and traditional classical music?

Well, concert music requires 100 percent of the intellectual and aural attention from the audience. But in a film we have to understand that we've got maybe 20 percent of the audience's attention, and our role there is to support the other aurally-prepared materials of dialogue and sound effects—the other 80 percent, or 50 percent if it's a quiet love scene.

What seems to be unique about the *Star Wars* films is that the nature of the films has been that I've had more room to create music that will come out of the film and more or less stand on its own—not as serious concert music at the level of Beethoven or Mozart, but in areas of light music, this material usually lives very well outside the film better than most film score music. Somehow in *Star Wars*, it's more of

an equal partner to the dialogue. It's closer to opera in that sense.

Who were your inspirations as a composer?

When I started as a pianist and I worked in the film studio, I had no idea that I would compose for films. But what I brought with me when I went to Columbia was a great love for jazz, which I grew up with, and also for the 20th Century modern composers. I was very interested in Stravinsky, and Prokofiev and Hindemith. I was enormously impressed with Bernard Herrmann [*Citizen Kane*, *Taxi Driver*], always. Also, even though he's a contemporary, I played for Jerry Goldsmith [*Chinatown*, *Mulan*] when I was a youngster and was always, then and now, very impressed with him.

I've been particularly fascinated with the émigrés from Europe in the 1930s—people like Max Steiner [*Gone with the Wind*, *Casablanca*] and Erich Korngold [*Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Of Human Bondage*], but also [theatrical composers] Vernon Duke and Kurt Weill, who came with [directors] Billy Wilder and Ernst Lubitsch to Hollywood. They brought this tremendous European culture.

In a certain sense, my colleagues and I are the artistic grandchildren of these men. We have been the beneficiaries of a rich tradition that grew up here in the early days of sound, the 1930s and '40s. I'm just old enough to have connected with and worked for many of these wonderful people, which makes me enormously fortunate to have experienced that musical life, and brought it with me into situations like these wonderful opportunities that George Lucas has presented to me.

Speaking of George Lucas, are you looking forward to re-teaming with him to complete this epic saga with Episodes II and III?

Very much so.

Has he given you any indication of what's to come?

No, he hasn't. He works alone also, and we meet later in the process. I know he'll have surprises for me, and I'm thrilled at the prospect. I hope I'm given the energy and the health to be with him through the end of this thing, because in a sense we're still in the middle of creating a work that will eventually be completed. And at the moment, it is one of my great ambitions in life to complete this with George, step-by-step the whole way, as we've done from the beginning. ☺

—Reporting by Michael Broidy

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A Naboo starfighter is shown in flight against a backdrop of the planet Naboo. The starfighter is yellow and white with blue accents. It has a long, slender body and a large, curved wing. The cockpit is visible, showing a pilot wearing a red and white helmet. The starfighter is flying towards the right side of the frame. The planet below is green and blue, with a white horizon line. The sky is dark with some stars visible.

A NEW GENERATION
OF SPECTACULAR STARSHIPS
TAKE FLIGHT

STARSHIPS OF EPISODE II

BY DANIEL WALLACE

LEFT: Naboo starfighters speed away from their planet to defend against the invading Trade Federation forces.

No one uses the word much anymore. It's antiquated and a bit quaint, bringing to mind jittery black and white images of Ming the Merciless' destructo-rocket, where the engine flame is simulated with a Roman candle and the ship is towed by a fishing line.

But you just can't have science fiction without rocketships—the rule has been in place since Georges Méliès' 1902 silent classic *A Trip to the Moon*. Rocketships are one of the three "R's" of the sci-fi genre. The other two, of course, are robots and ray guns.

In that spirit, Episode I is similar to the classic movie serials of old—cliffhanger thrillers with titles like *King of the Rocketmen* and *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe*. Even the new film's title, *The Phantom Menace*, is a contemporary echo of the stirring pulp adventures that first captured the public's imagination and allowed people to believe in fantastic gadgets and exotic star empires.

But *Star Wars* goes beyond simple pulp, drawing from the well of myth and legend to create a modern-day fable about courage and self-sacrifice. When Obi-Wan Kenobi tells his protégé to "Use the Force, Luke" in *Star Wars: A New Hope*, we learn that technology isn't the enemy—over-reliance on technology is. A bloated, overbearing vessel like the Death Star can be skewered by a nimble Rebel X-wing fighter, as long as the X-wing pilot trusts his feelings and listens to his heart.

Rocketships...er, starships, play just as pivotal a role in *The Phantom Menace*. Without the ships of Episode I, the good guys would be defenseless and the bad guys would lack their aggressive punch. The main heroes would be stranded dirtside, unable to flit around the stars through the miracle of hyperdrive. Most importantly, the audience would be denied the chance to see some of the most amazing pieces of motion-picture wizardry since Méliès' little rocket crashed into the Man in the Moon.

<SLEEK AND RADIANT>

REPUBLIC CRUISERS



LEFT: This Corellian-built Republic cruiser, with a squared-off cockpit and mostly flat body, is colored red to symbolize ambassadorial neutrality. **BELOW:** A Republic cruiser with two Jedi aboard sets down in the docking bay of a Trade Federation battleship.

In *Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope*, the first thing that raced on the screen was the desperate *Tantive IV*, a Corellian corvette carrying Princess Leia and a set of stolen plans. Hot on its heels was the gargantuan *Devastator*, an Imperial Star Destroyer of such sheer mass that it seemed to stretch on forever in a bone-shaking traverse across the top of the frame. The image is unforgettable. Since the *Star Wars* saga is a classic mythos noted for its recurring themes, it is fitting that Episode I opens with a similar dynamic.

This time, it is the *Radiant VII* that streaks

into view, carrying the Jedi Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn into the heart of danger. The *Radiant VII* is a member of the ship class commonly called the Republic cruiser. In the context of the saga, the crimson-hued *Radiant VII* was designed by the Corellian Engineering Corporation and constructed in the famed shipyards in orbit around the planet Corellia, much like its descendant the *Tantive IV*.

As their name implies, most Republic cruisers are used by the ruling galactic government as courier ships and ambassadorial trans-

ports. Red is the color of interstellar diplomacy—note that Princess Leia's ship bore a scarlet stripe around its hull. The bright red paint job lavished on the *Radiant VII* indicates that the vessel comes straight from the capital planet of Coruscant. Out of respect, most people give these vessels a wide berth, but the high-status passengers often carried aboard Republic cruisers make the ships tempting targets for kidnappers and assassins.

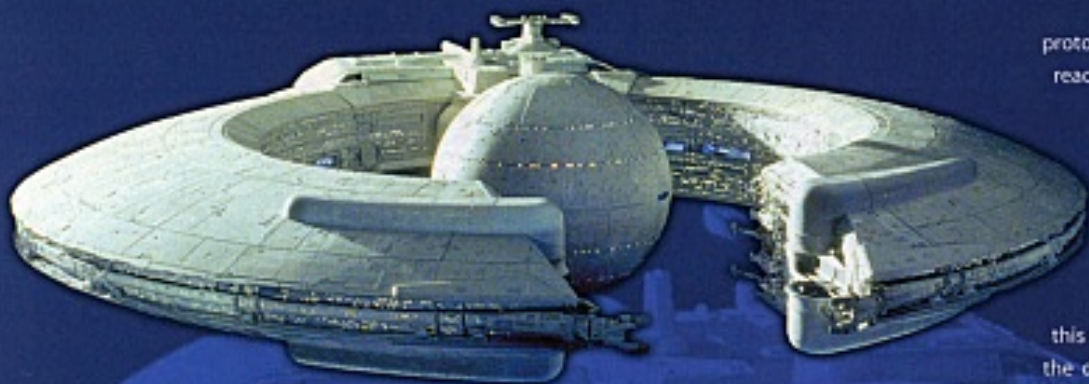
Princess Leia lied when she told Darth Vader that her consular ship was on an innocent diplomatic mission. Not so in Episode I—the *Radiant VII* actually is making a political house-call. As the opening crawl explains, the cruiser carrying the Jedi had been personally dispatched to the besieged world of Naboo by Supreme Chancellor Valorum. As we soon see, the less-than-hospitable Trade Federation gives the little ship an astonishingly poor welcome. The unfortunate *Tantive IV* fared no better.





FEDERATION BATTLESHIP

< HEAVILY-ARMORED HAVENS >



Imperial Star Destroyers are massive metal arrowheads—straightforward implements of war. The battleships employed by the devious Trade Federation in *The Phantom Menace* are less martial in appearance, but are no less intimidating. A spherical bridge is connected to a tremendous bank of ion engines via a slender neck passage. This central body structure is encircled by a matched pair of graceful curving arcs, stretching forward like two hooked fingers ready to pluck out the hearts of the Trade Federation's enemies.

The Trade Federation is dominated by the reptilian Neimoidian species, whose corporate culture is bureaucratic and spineless. Neimoidians are merchants, not mercenaries, and they have therefore used their wealth to build a throng of substitute warriors. Battle droids control the ground, droid starfighters dominate the sky, and Federation battleships—greatly-modified cargo vessels—provide well-shielded, heavily-armored havens for the Neimoidian Trade Viceroy as he cruises the galactic commerce lanes.

In addition to their formidable defenses, Trade Federation battleships pack a punishing

offensive wallop. Turbolaser batteries and tractor beam projectors come in handy when the Trade Federation needs to intimidate a business partner or enforce a planetary blockade. The huge battleships can go toe-to-toe with many warships in the Republic navy. They have no external Achilles' heel but are still vulnerable to internal sabotage—for instance, a pair of

proton torpedoes fired into the central fusion reactor.

A modified version of the battleship is employed to broadcast the signal that controls the Trade Federation's droid armies. A forest of transmission antennae, powerful enough to punch through jamming signals, sprouts up from the aft section of this specialized vessel. Since any disruption in the droid control signal would be disastrous, many of the ship's receptors, transmitters, and antennae are redundant backups.

The huge and bulky Trade Federation battleship bristles with weaponry and is heavily shielded. **TOP:** Droid starfighters stream from a Trade Federation battleship. **BELOW:** The pilots aboard a Republic cruiser watch as Nute Gunray, the Trade Federation viceroy, appears on a viewscreen and welcomes them and their Jedi passengers to board his command ship.



QUEEN'S ROYAL STARSHIP

<ELEGANT AND GRACEFUL>

The Millennium Falcon gets more screen time than any other vessel in the classic Star Wars trilogy. And with good reason—it's the "people mover." The Falcon serves a key function in the script by getting the core characters from planet to planet so they can continue their adventures. In Episode I, the Queen's starship fulfills this same plot role, but the two ships couldn't be more dissimilar in appearance and personality.

Nevertheless, both ships reflect the character of their owners. Han Solo's Millennium Falcon is scruffy, scrappy, and armed to the teeth. Queen Amidala's royal starship is elegant, graceful, and equipped with no offensive weapons at all.

The Queen's sleek silvery vessel is a J-type 327 Nubian, meaning its internal components were imported from the specialty planet of Nubia; the dazzling spaceframe, however, is of traditional Naboo manufacture. The ship's lack of weaponry is symbolic and reflects the pacifistic nature of the Naboo people. But even though the Naboo are doves, they are not dolts—they realize that other citizens of the galaxy do not share their same compunctions about killing intelligent beings. Consequently, the royal starship is equipped with a robust deflector shield system. In addition, a squadron of well-armed Naboo N-1 starfighters can be ordered to escort the vessel if the Queen plans to pass through a danger zone.

ABOVE: Queen Amidala's gleaming royal starship, a J-type 327 Nubian, carries no weapons in keeping with the philosophy of the peaceful planet, but does have deflector shields.

NABOO N-1 STARFIGHTER

<LASER CANNONS & PROTON TORPEDOES>

The custom-built Naboo Royal starfighters are usually used for routine patrols and ceremonial duties, but they can also be used in defense of the peaceful planet.

Doug Chiang, Episode I's design director, says that creating exotic vehicles for the movie screen was an education. "Film design is about overall visual impact and how well a design propels the story," he explained last year in an interview with the Insider (Star Wars Insider #39). "It has to work in five seconds."

The Royal Naboo N-1 starfighter is a prime example of this striking philosophy. Dressed up in bright yellow and sparkling chrome, with three delicate tapers stuck on the back end, the N-1 looks like the world's flashiest pitchfork. The three sharply pointed tines make the Naboo starfighter the most distinctive vessel in Episode I, even if it's not immediately apparent just what the appendages actually do.

The official explanation for the Naboo starfighter's appearance matches flawlessly with the bucolic nature of the Naboo people, as well as explaining an aspect of the climactic dogfight seen in *The Phantom Menace*. The N-1's central spine is actually a giant plug-in antenna, used to download strategic broadcasts from the Palace Battle Computer. The computer also provides autopilot coordinates, which the ships use to automatically rendezvous at the target zone. This handy feature allows a novice starpilot like Anakin Skywalker to fly into the thick of battle while he's still busy figuring out the controls. The N-1's two engines sport shorter needlelike structures,

designed to dissipate the engine heat and keep the skies of Naboo free from pollutants.

Like the X-wing fighters seen in *A New Hope*, Naboo starfighters are armed with laser cannons and a limited supply of explosive proton torpedoes. Anakin's uncanny ability with the Force allows him to pierce the Trade Federation battleship's reactor with a single torpedo salvo. A full generation will pass (in Star Wars time) before Anakin's son Luke will accomplish a similar feat in *A New Hope*.



TOP: The pilot of a Naboo starfighter appears surprised by what he encounters above his planet. BOTTOM: Battle droids in the docking bay of the Trade Federation battleship are startled at the unexpected intrusion of a Naboo starfighter piloted by Anakin Skywalker.

PODRACERS

< HEARTS THAT ROAR >

For nearly a thousand years, the ancient Romans held spectacular chariot races in the Circus Maximus for the glory of their emperors and the delight of the plebeians. The sport was thrilling and often violent, as reckless charioteers clashed on the track and even went so far as to poison their competitors' steeds.

Episode I puts a *Star Wars* spin on Caesar's favorite pastime. The sprawling Mos Espa Arena stands in for the Circus Maximus. Podracers—high-tech flying chariots—are pulled by jet engines instead of horses. The powerful racers float above the ground on frictionless anti-gravity buffers and can go as fast as 965 kilometers per hour, launching their drivers off on harrowing, white-knuckled thrill rides.

Podracers are so fast, in fact, that human beings are considered too stupid and sluggish to fly them. Only Anakin Skywalker's skill with the Force allows him to navigate the dry river gullies and anticipate the hairpin turns in Tatooine's harsh outback. Those alien species that innately possess lightning-fast reflexes, such as the Dugs (Sebulba's species), Troikens

(like Gasgano), and ErKits (such as Ody Mandrell), dominate the Podracing circuit and claim the lion's share of the annual victories.

Unlike most of the vehicles seen in Episode I, which are produced by unique manufacturing corporations, there is no "standard" version of a Podracer. Like the ramshackle *Millennium Falcon*, Podracers are often pieced-together contraptions that look rickety on the outside but have hearts that roar. Anakin's racer boasts two Radon-Ulzer engines scavenged from a starfighter. Other common drive variants include split-X engines and unstable, four-engined "Quadra-pods."

Most drivers are involved in the construction of their own Podracers. Many of these individuals have made a few "special modifications," as Han Solo might diplomatically put it. Sebulba, the wily Dug, has installed two flame throwers on the outside edges of his engines. Other racers have been known to employ sawblades, slugthrowers, and flash-blinding spotlights, though being caught with an illegal modification on a Podracer is grounds for immediate expulsion from the racing circuit.

ABOVE & BOTTOM
LEFT: Anakin Skywalker does his best to get past the alien Sebulba in the climactic moments of the Boonta Eve Podrace on the planet Tatooine.



63 EXT. FOREST LANDING SITE—ENDOR
Two IMPERIAL SCOUTS are wandering through bushes in the valley below. Their two ROCKET BIKES are parked nearby.

That's how the shooting script for *Return of the Jedi* described the first appearance of the speeder bike, a sort of flying motorcycle that would shame even the most souped-up Suzuki—providing its driver doesn't overuse the throttle and crash headlong into a tree.

Episode I's twin variations on the speeder bike, the STAP and the Sith speeder, are both



One of the last things seen in the *Return of the Jedi* Special Edition is a jubilant celebration on the capital planet of Coruscant. Almost lost amid the revelry is a shot of an overcrowded air taxi pulling up to a jutting landing platform. When similar flying buses appeared onscreen in Episode I, it was obvious that the *Star Wars* saga had come full circle.

Coruscant is a swarming urban metropolis—New York City taken to the hundredth power. With thousands of people packed into every square block, personal transportation is a luxury afforded to only the very rich. The vast majority of Coruscantis travel between their homes, workplaces, and favorite nightspots via independently-owned taxi lines or government-run mass transit systems.

The largest air taxis are enormous affairs, dwarfing the cruise liners that ply the oceans of Earth.

Thousands of passengers crowd onto each deck and disembark through multiple exitways at each scheduled stop. Unlike their smaller taxi brethren, these slow-moving behemoths follow invisible magnetic guidance lines in order to navigate through Republic City's 3-D traffic labyrinth.

Coruscant's floating transit system is remarkable for its seeming banality.

While the other vehicles of Episode I are breakneck racers and electrifying starfighters, air taxis are a simple, everyday means of conveyance that people in the *Star Wars* universe probably take for granted. Nevertheless, movie audiences come away from the theater enthralled by the thought of riding a thousand stories up in the air with breathtaking, vertigo-inducing views outside of every porthole. Lucky *Star Wars* folks—even their public transportation is spectacular.



ABOVE & LEFT: Coruscant taxi, side, top and three-quarters views.

SITH SPEEDER AND STAP

<SPEEDY AND EFFICIENT>

lightweight skimmers used for speedy, efficient transportation. The STAP, an acronym for Single Trooper Aerial Platform, is a battlefield scouting vehicle that turns a battle droid into a mobile weapons platform. The STAP's twin blaster cannons are mere trifles when compared with the heavy artillery of a Trade Federation Armored Attack Tank, but the STAP's speed and agility make it a stinging gadfly that's tough to swat.

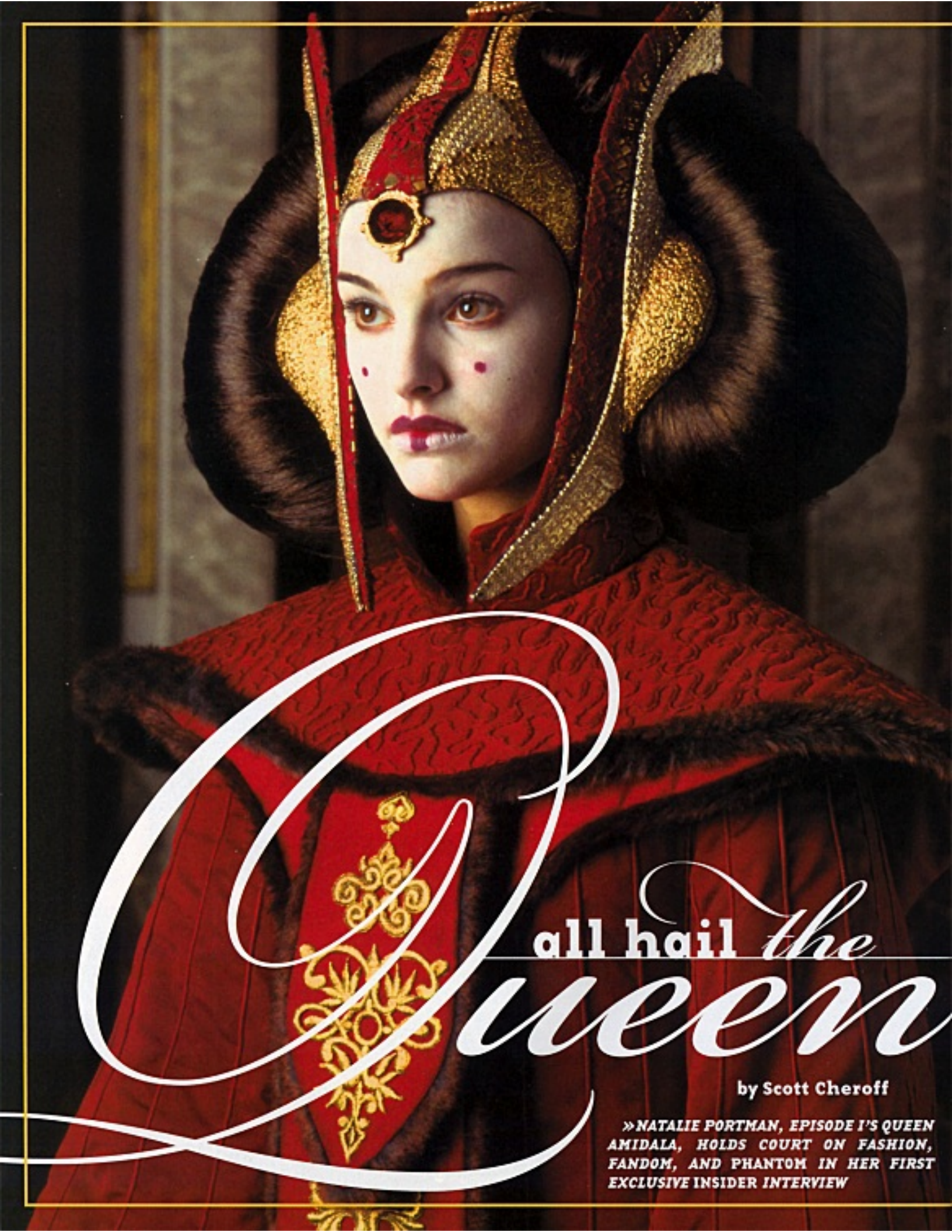
The Sith speeder is an esoteric craft based on a long-forgotten design. The craft, flown by Darth Maul, possesses no blaster cannons—but one gets the feeling Maul would disdain such weapons anyway. The Sith Lord's preferred means of attack seems to be to gun the speeder's engine and swoop down on his enemies at full blast, allowing him to lop off their heads with his double-bladed saber before they even have a chance to duck.

ABOVE RIGHT: Astride his Sith speeder, Darth Maul (played by actor Ray Park) releases Sith probe droids in an effort to track down the two Jedi he is seeking on Tatooine. Sith speeder, side and three-quarter front views. **LEFT:** Trade Federation battle droids on their flying STAP platforms attack Gungan warriors.



In essence, the STAP and Sith speeder are mounts, cinematic parallels to the cowboy and his horse. The *Star Wars* saga has many elements in common with the classic Western. Note, however, that Episode I's bad guys ride machines exclusively, once again betraying their over-reliance on cold technology. By contrast, the heroic Gungans ride simple swamp beasts and Tatooine's hardworking farmers employ rugged pack animals. ☐

DANIEL WALLAGE's latest book is *What's What in Episode I*. Author of numerous *Star Wars* publications, Dan wrote about the droids of Episode I in *Star Wars Insider* #43.



all hail the *Queen*

by Scott Cheroff

» NATALIE PORTMAN, EPISODE I'S QUEEN AMIDALA, HOLDS COURT ON FASHION, FANDOM, AND PHANTOM IN HER FIRST EXCLUSIVE INSIDER INTERVIEW

If every *Star Wars* trilogy must feature a strong, smart, beautiful

female leader with a royal title, a passion for her people, and a fearless approach to fashion, then thank the maker that Natalie Portman started acting. For film buffs who have been following the young actress' career, the truth has been out there since her stunning debut in 1994's *The Professional*: Portman is one of cinema's most promising performers, and news of her casting in the pivotal role of Queen Amidala in the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy inspired feverish fans like me to choruses of "Long Live the Queen."

In *The Professional* (originally released in director Luc Besson's native France under the title *Léon*), Portman played Mathilda, the brutally orphaned girl who formed half of an unlikely symbiotic relationship with professional hitman Jean Reno, conveying a wisdom beyond her years (she was a mere 12) and garnering her instant notice as an actor to be reckoned with. The praise continued when Portman again commanded the screen, holding her own against Matt Dillon and Timothy Hutton in 1996's *Beautiful Girls*.

Portman continued to distinguish herself in a string of diverse films, including 1995's *Heat* with Al Pacino, Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), and Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!* (1996), in which she played President Jack Nicholson's daughter. In her next film, *Anywhere But Here*, Portman stars opposite Susan Sarandon, under the direction of filmmaker Wayne Wang.

But the young actress, now 17 and in her senior year in high school, garnered perhaps her most acclaim for her nine-month New York stage stint starring in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, an experience she says changed her forever.

Yet despite her image as a serious young thespian, Portman, who was born in Jerusalem but raised in New York City, is still a somewhat typical teenager who hangs out with her friends, watches *Dawson's Creek* ("I feel like such a cheese," she says of the admission), listens to Portishead while she does her homework, ponders college, and harbors a fervent passion for fashion ("It is an art, but people mistake it for materialism," she insists).

With her interest in fashion, Portman is well-suited to play the exotic Queen Amidala, since—like Carrie Fisher's Princess Leia before her—the character blazes new trails in the areas of costume and (especially) hair in Episode I. But beneath the surface, Natalie Portman has also set herself apart from her fellow actresses by bringing a surprising and compelling reservoir of depth to an array of

challenging roles—a depth that with each successive *Star Wars* episode will become more important to portraying the epic story of Queen Amidala, who, like Natalie Portman, is about to grow up before our eyes.

Tell me about Queen Amidala. What kind of person is she?

She is very young, obviously. She is 14, but she has all this power. Yet she's also kind of naïve. She's very trusting of the people around her because she is so young, so people like Darth Sidious are playing around with her. But she's also very smart, and she's really compassionate and caring, and she wants to represent her people. She cares about her people. She makes all her political decisions based on what would be best for her people. She's not a selfish ruler at all.

Had you ever played a character like her before—a leader?

No, never—I've never done anything that was like fantasy or science-fiction, where they actually would put a 14-year-old girl in charge. In real life they won't put girls in power, usually.

You were just 14 the summer you made *Star Wars*. Had you even seen the classic trilogy?

Yes, I watched them after I got the job. I had a marathon because I had never seen them all—I had seen parts, and obviously it's part of the culture, so you know certain things, like Princess Leia's buns, and lightsabers. I knew key words, but I didn't really know the gist of it. So I watched them all just to get a feeling for what they were like when I got the job.

I was really, really excited because they're so cool. They showed a shift in filmmaking that was really new, and George was the first one to go in that direction of these big films, using technology to make images of things that you can't do on the set, and to make it look real. I thought it was amazing—now, it's still impressive and exciting just because of the nature of

the story, but when it initially came out, it was the first of its kind. Now everything is trying to be like *Star Wars*.

I think this film, Episode I, is going to do that again, because it's using all new techniques. George has this amazing sense of what he's doing before he does it. You know a good director when they have a vision of what they want—they can visualize it, actually see what it's going to look like before they film it. And George is just amazing like that. It's what inventors must have been like when they were inventing lights and telephones and stuff like that—to have this vision of the future. His people have created all the technology that's making films so exciting today. Plus, he's really nice and cool, and down to earth too.

Knowing how much people love *Star Wars*, did you feel a lot of pressure stepping into the saga and fulfilling that vision?

Oh, sure. Because people have their minds set already as to what kinds of thing they like, and they have their memories of what they loved about the originals, and the people that were in the originals. So it is a kind of pressure, because you have to live up to all these fans who have been obsessed with these movies. I mean, some people really make it a lifestyle. I know people whose lives are *Star Wars*. Everything about their life is connected somehow. I never really thought about it that much until I was a part of it, but people really make it a huge part of their lives.

Your friends who are big *Star Wars* fans must have kind of freaked out that you're a part of it now. Do they come to you for information?

Well, no one ever asks—I'm not allowed to say anything, and I think that they kind of like that, because who wants to know everything about a movie before you see it? It ruins the movie. But my friends, like there's this one boy who's in my grade who is a friend of mine, who told me that he bought the *Star Wars*

Actress Natalie Portman plays the role of young Queen Amidala, shown here in her throne-room costume, in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*.

Trivial Pursuit. He's probably the biggest *Star Wars* fan I know personally, and he was saying that he was reading the questions, and one of the questions was something like, "Which star of Episode I had their Sweet Sixteen on June 9th, 1997?" And he was like, "Oh, my God," and he found my Sweet Sixteen invitation and he started freaking out. I was like, "OK, you've known me since I was 13—you shouldn't be so impressed."

Why do you think so many people get excited over *Star Wars*?

It's very simple, but it's very honest. It's kind of like George. I mean, he's certainly not simple—he's one of the most brilliant men I've ever met—but he's very direct and honest, and he's not pretentious in the least. He never acts above anyone. He's never condescending at all. He's just really on your level and just simple and clean in his speech. But he is so smart at the same time, and I think that's like the movie too, because it has a depth to it. It has real meaning and messages underneath it. And he really did base it on mythology and fables, so it has a very universal and timeless story to it. But at the same time, it's not trying to be fancy. It's allowing everyone to enjoy it on a different level. People can enjoy it however they want—they can look for depth in it, or they can just see it on the surface as pure entertainment.

Most of your films have been character driven dramas. Was it strange to find yourself surrounded by blue screens and co-stars who weren't there?

Yeah, it was. I had done blue screen a little bit with *Mars Attacks!*, but I didn't have a big part in that, so I didn't get that much experience with it then. But it's weird because there's a lot more for you to concentrate on than just acting and your lines—like where you're looking and where your eye-line is. Sometimes you'll be looking at a blue screen, but you're supposed to be looking into someone's eyes, and it's kind of weird because your eyes focus differently when you're looking at a wall or if you're looking at a dot. But they can't put a dot on the screen for you, because it's a blue screen for a reason, you know? So you have everyone focusing at the same point and staying out of the way of a certain character if a certain character is there, but they're not really there. There's just more to think about.

It was a much harder job than I expected. I wasn't doing hard labor like some people were doing, but it was the first time I ever felt like it was a job. I expected it to be kind of easy because it's an action movie and I didn't have a lot of dramatic stuff to do in it. It's mainly a set-up movie, to set up the others. But it came out so cool! It looks so awesome. I can brag about the way it looks because it has nothing to do with me.

Are you looking forward to coming back to do Episode II?

I am, because I miss everyone so much. I really loved everyone. It was hard work, but I loved the people that I worked with. All the actors are so nice. Ahmed Best is awesome. Ewan McGregor is so cool. Jake Lloyd is the cutest kid, and Liam Neeson is the best guy.

"I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS OLDER, OR JADED OR WORLDLY OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT."

And George is an amazing person, really nice and intelligent and a great director. He is so efficient, and the crew is awesome. The crew was so cool.

After you did *The Professional* at age 12, and then *Beautiful Girls*, a lot of people commented that your performances were so "mature" or "grown up." What did you make of those reactions?

Well, I thought that was kind of weird, because I've never, ever felt older than my peers. Sometimes I felt different, especially recently, but I think it's also the family I've grown up in—since my dad is Israeli I've grown up with a different set of values than most American kids, so I've felt different in that way. But I never felt like I was more mature than anyone else. I think that people in general will underestimate young people, and a lot of young people don't know how to show their maturity to adults.

I think I was always good at relating to adults because I grew up as an only child. It was me and my parents all the time. We moved a lot, because my dad was learning all his stuff to become a doctor. So we lived in Israel, and then we moved to Maryland when he did his residency, and then we moved to Connecticut when he did his fellowship, and then we moved to New York when he was finally done.

I don't even remember who my friends were before I was nine. I have no clear memories from before I was around 12.

But it was very weird when people were saying, "She has an old soul." I was like, "What? No I don't." I've never thought of myself as older, or jaded or worldly or anything like that. I still have a very nice vision of what the world is like, and I hope to keep it that way. I'm not this older person. But I guess it is an older thing to want to stay innocent.

With these three *Star Wars* movies, you'll be growing up in front of the world. Does all the attention make you uncomfortable?

The only annoying thing is when people stare at me. I know it's part of the thing, so I'm trying to get over it, but it's the weirdest feeling. I just feel like it's a really rude thing to do. I'm not a person who's ever trying to attract attention. Usually, I'm OK because I'm short and I'm brown-haired and I kind of blend in, but it's very weird. I'm pretty good about being cool with people who are famous, but if, for example, Madonna walked into the room, I don't know that I would be able to just talk to whoever I'm talking to and not even flinch. It's human nature.

Who are your role models in life, and also what actors do you admire?

I admire both my parents, because both of them are amazing people. They're just good, honest people, and I admire what they've dedicated their lives to do. My dad is a doctor and my mom is the best mom ever. She's a really dedicated mom. I think both of those are very admirable things to do with your life. But then there are other people, like I also admire [the late Israeli leader and peacemaker] Yitzhak Rabin, and writers whom I love. I just read *A Prayer for Owen Meany* and I'm in awe of John Irving. And actors, I admire Audrey Hepburn so much, because she was able to get over the whole film thing and put her career aside to work with children and help other people and reach out.

There are so many people I admire. I think anything you do, if you are helping other people, is great because you're making someone else happy.

Have you always been into acting since you were a little kid?



Actress Natalie Portman plays the role of young Queen Amidala, shown here in a traveling gown, in *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace*.



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70 STAR WARS INSIDER

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TOUGH BUT VULNERABLE (TOP TO BOTTOM) As Mathilda, her breakthrough role in *The Professional*; With Susan Sarandon in the upcoming family drama *Anywhere But Here*; As Tally Dole, the triumphant First Daughter, in *Mary McCormack*; (RIGHT) Queen Amidala (played by actress Natalie Portman) isn't above taking matters into her own hands to thwart the occupation of her planet in *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace*.

Well, I was always really into performing for people. Ever since I was little I would always put on shows for people, but it was more like singing and dancing. I'd get all my cousins together on holidays and direct them in plays and make up my own songs and have them do it. So I was always a little ham, which is weird because now if you ask me to get up in front of people and do anything like that I get so embarrassed. I'm humiliated if I have to speak in front of class.

I really wanted to be a dancer. I was serious about dancing, and it was actually after dance class one day that this man from Revlon saw me in a pizza parlor. He said, "Would you be interested in child modeling?" and I was like, "Eww." We thought it was something gross, but we found out that he was a legitimate guy and I told him that I was really interested in acting, because I wanted to be a dancer on Broadway. That was my dream when I was 10. So I told him I wasn't interested in modeling, but I was interested in acting, and he introduced me to acting agents and I started going out on auditions. I never said, "I am an actress, I've got this fire inside me." I was never like that. It just kind of happened, and then I happened to start getting parts, really soon.

Did you take acting classes?

No. I took dance classes, and when I was little I took singing lessons. I was definitely heading more down the Broadway route. I wanted to be in Oklahoma or something. I wasn't thinking of films at all.

Having worked opposite everyone from Liam Neeson and Susan Sarandon to Jack Nicholson and Al Pacino in your young career, are you ever intimidated working with such giants of the silver screen?

I've never felt intimidated because of the way everyone else acts. You always hear stories about people acting rude to them or making them feel uncomfortable, but I never had that happen. never had anyone intimidate me at all, purposely or by accident. Everyone has been really cool with me. But then there are times when I look at my performances after the film's done, and I'm thinking, "Wait, someone should have intimidated me."

How did your experience starring in *The Diary of Anne Frank* on Broadway affect you as an actress—and as a person?

It was a pretty unbelievable experience. First of all, doing stage while being in school was very hard. I was doing eight shows a week, and I was a full time student in my junior year, which is your hardest year. The hardest part about it was that it was so routine. I felt like I never got out of my routine. I was performing for seven months in New York, and I performed for one month in Boston and we were in rehearsals for one month. It had an effect on me, because when you're tired you get really emotional too, and also I had to cry five times every night on stage. There were five points

during the show where I'd cry.

Would you really cry?

Yes. There are nights when you can't and there are other nights when you can't stop. Some days it just hits you in a way that it is so unbelievably moving. My director, an amazing man named James Lapine, would tell me, "You're learning your craft on this show." Because when I started out, I had nothing. When you're not trained, you have to feel the emotions. You have to go through it yourself, and sometimes that can be really hard. In film it's much easier to not be trained, because you do it once, you feel it, and it's over with. But on stage you're reliving the same thing over and over again. I loved performing the show and thought it made me a fuller person and a deeper person, and also helped me with my acting, but toward the end it was very difficult for me.

This year I've been ridiculously tired the whole year, which is weird because I'm purposely not doing any after-school activities, nothing. And I am so tired. My mom thinks it's residual sleep deficit from the whole year. My dad asked me if I was bitten by the tsetse fly because I can sleep for 18 hours. I can sleep a whole day. If no one woke me up, I would sleep 24 hours. I think it's a combination of my age and my appreciation for sleep. Sleep is so wonderful. Sometimes you can oversleep and feel

like you've wasted your time, but I think it's one of the best ways to spend your time.

What music are you listening to these days?

I listen to a lot of Stevie Wonder, the Beatles, Busta Rhymes, and Björk. I listen to everything. I'm very all over the place, but I'm very specific about what I like in each category. I like REM and Beck and Radiohead. Oh, I love Portishead. Portishead *Dummy* is one of my favorite CDs of all time. I listen to it over and over and over again, and I never get sick of it—and that's such a test for me, because there are certain things I can be obsessed with for three weeks and then I never listen to it again in my life.

You're getting ready to go to college. Will you study acting, or are there other things you want to pursue?

I don't know if I want to be an actress later on. I'm really thinking. I'm not really sure, but I'm thinking about what I want to be. I'm very interested in medicine. I'd be interested in being a doctor. I don't know if I'd do well in an office job—I don't know if I'd be able to stay in one place all day. I think I'd most enjoy being a magazine editor.

Well, I've got news for you—that's what I do, and there's a whole lot of office involved in that.

But I'd go more for a fashion magazine type thing. My friends make fun of me because I'm so obsessed with magazines. You don't understand—I love magazines. We go to the book store and I am like a magnet. I'm drawn to them. We go to Borders and my friends are straight to the music, but I go straight to the magazines, and I can stay there for an hour just reading everything.

Music and magazines, that's what I enjoy. As silly as some of them are, that's my release. I'll read *Vogue* and *W* and *Vanity Fair*, but I also like to read the *New York Times Magazine* every week, and *New York* magazine and *Time Out*, just to see what's going on in New York. Occasionally I'll be a smarty and pick up *Time* or *Newsweek*, but that's on the rare occasions when I want to be smart and relaxed. But you know, there's nothing wrong in the pleasures of fashion. ☺

"I'M SO OBSESSED WITH MAGAZINES. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND—I LOVE MAGAZINES."

EPISODE I BOOKS LET THE INVASION BEGIN

by Jason Fry

» **Beginning with this issue,** *Star Wars Insider* introduces a new column dedicated to the universe of *Star Wars* books, both fiction and non-fiction. 'Straight from the Horse's Mouth,' our exclusive *Star Wars* comics column by Dark Horse Comics editor Peet Janes, will return in the next *Insider*, rotating each issue with 'Star Wars Bookshelf.'

OK, so you've already seen Episode I enough times that you can anticipate all the twists and turns of the Podrace, not to mention your uncanny ability to count how many battle droids Obi-Wan Kenobi dispatched by closing your eyes and rerunning the movie in your head. But don't think it's time to start counting the days until Episode II just yet—there's a lot more to *The Phantom Menace* than what you saw on the screen.

Yes, there are twists and turns in the plot that the movie only hints at, secrets beneath the surfaces of starships like Darth Maul's Sith Infiltrator, and much more to learn about how George Lucas and Lucasfilm crafted the movie that *Star Wars* fans have been waiting for since, oh, about 1983. If all you've seen is what happened in the movie theater, you've hardly seen it all.

While *Star Wars* has returned, at last, to the big screen, the saga has been going strong in bookstores since 1991, when the publication of Timothy Zahn's *Heir to the Empire* let grateful fans reunite with Luke Skywalker and company during a dangerous time for the fledgling New Republic. Since then, more than 100 books have followed, each illuminating another corner of the richly detailed *Star Wars* universe and adding to the history of the long struggle to restore freedom to the galaxy.

Now, just as avid moviegoers are finally seeing the last years of the Old Republic and the first years of Anakin Skywalker, the boy who will one day become the black-armored Sith Lord Darth Vader, authors are chronicling those times, too—including some events that happened months or even years before the story that unfolds in *The Phantom Menace*.

«Unfilmed Insights»

First of all, few fans will be able to resist *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (Del Rey, \$25). With the publication of the adaptation of Episode I, Terry Brooks—already acclaimed for *The Sword of Shannara* and more than a dozen other works of fantasy—joins an exclusive club boasting just three other writers: Alan Dean Foster, Donald F. Glut and James Kahn, the authors of the adaptations of *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, respectively.

But fans expecting a typical movie novelization—one that simply parrots the screen-

» **Fans expecting a typical movie novelization—one that simply parrots the screenplay for Episode I—will be pleasantly surprised.**

play for Episode I—will be pleasantly surprised. Brooks, with Lucas' cooperation, has created something else altogether: a larger story that includes all of what you've seen onscreen, but also delves deeply into the history of the galaxy and the life and mind of young Anakin Skywalker.

Whereas on screen *The Phantom Menace* begins over the imperiled planet Naboo, on the page it begins long before that, in the middle of a frantic Podrace on the planet Tatooine in which young Anakin battles for position with the crafty Sebulba. But this time, Anakin is outmaneuvered and crashes, a failure that leaves him more determined than ever to find a way to win.

Readers will also meet an old spacer encountered by Anakin and his friends—a

spacer who has watched Anakin's performance and tells the boy he has the ability to become something special. It's an encounter that intensifies the boy's desire to leave Tatooine behind and see the galaxy, a feeling that years later will overcome his son, too, during many of the desert world's double twilights.

Author Brooks told the *Insider* the new early scenes serve to shift the focus of the story to Anakin and away from Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn, the first characters we meet onscreen. The novel's emphasis on Anakin is maintained even in scenes also depicted in the film. "The viewpoint is pretty much his whenever he's in the storyline," Brooks says. "It makes it more his story—which is really what this story is all about."

Besides being taken inside the mind of an extraordinary boy, readers will get to listen in

on the thoughts of the evil Darth Sidious and Darth Maul, gain insight into Qui-Gon Jinn and his sometimes tense relations with the other Jedi Knights, and soak up some fascinating lore about the Jedi, the Sith and their history—along, it should be said, with other fascinating material that would have only slowed down the furious pacing of the movie.

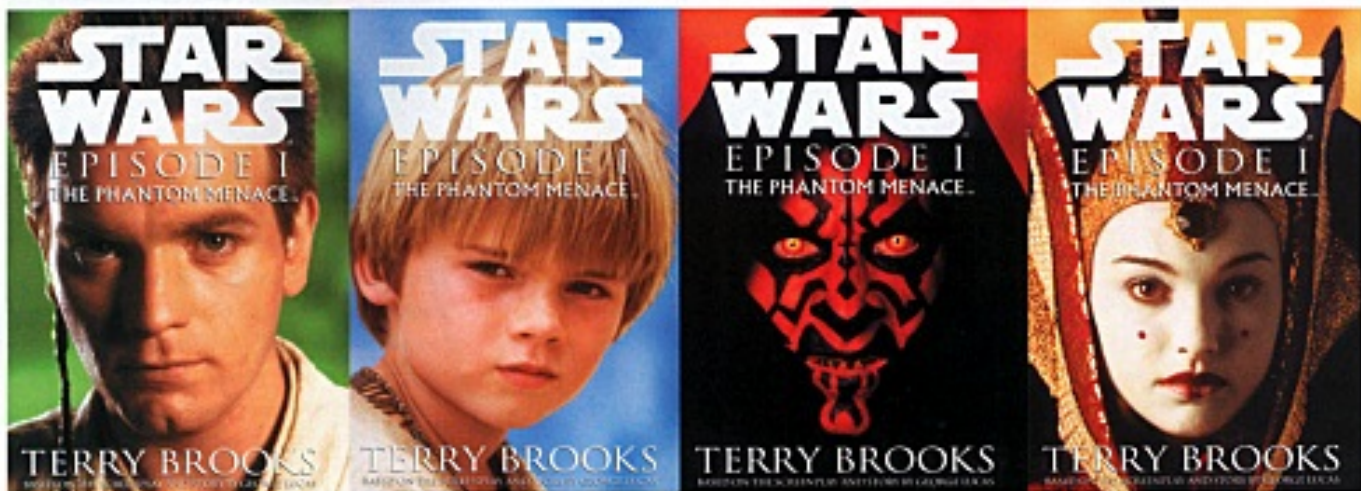
After completing his first draft, Brooks recalls, he and Del Rey editorial director Shelly Shapiro felt the book needed more in-depth material about the history of the Jedi Knights and the Republic. So Brooks called Lucas, who gave him "a tremendous amount of material" during an hour-long conversation. Some of that material will appear in the adaptation, offering fans a crash course in once mysterious *Star Wars* history.

"People who want to know more can pick up the book and get some answers," Brooks says, noting that the history lesson unfolds from a number of characters' points of view. "The trick is not to present it in block form, but in chunks all through the storyline. Part of

1930s and 1940s—also the era, not coincidentally, of the movie serials that were a huge inspiration for the *Star Wars* saga. The novelization—a condensed version of the story of Episode I—is richly illustrated with nostalgic line drawings by Brandon McKinney. And since

information all of their own.

Similar surprises await readers of the Jedi Apprentice series from Scholastic (paperback, \$4.99), the first two books of which—Dave Wolverton's *The Rising Force* and Judy Blundell's *The Dark Rival*—are on shelves now.



what's intriguing in books is that you learn things a bit at a time."

<Collectors Editions>

Whether to pick up a copy of Brooks' novel is a no-brainer. The big decision for fans will be which copy: the novel boasts four different covers, each of which has one character on the front and another on the back. Decide which is your favorite, or decide not to decide by collecting them all. (I'm a Darth Maul guy, myself.)

Of course, younger fans may find Brooks' dense novel tough going. That's where the junior novelization of Episode I (Scholastic, \$5.99) comes in. The book, aimed at kids between 8 and 12, is written by Patricia Wrede, a fantasy writer whose *Enchanted Forest Chronicles* have proved extremely popular with kids—and whose deft touch Scholastic wanted for richly detailed scenes like those in the Theed palace. Scholastic editorial director Craig Walker describes Wrede as "one of those writers who brings a romance and beauty to the language not often found in novelizations."

Readers will also find beauty in a special collector's edition of the junior novelization, featuring a silver-and-black slipcase and a postcard-style insert of an artist's rendering of the podrace.

Another alternative for children is the *Mighty Chronicles* novelization by veteran *Star Wars* author John Whitman (Chronicle, \$9.95). Whitman's book is reminiscent of "big little books," a format whose golden age was the

Chronicle has adapted the original *Star Wars* trilogy in the same style, fans can collect the whole saga to enjoy themselves or to share with their children.

» Whether to pick up a copy of Brooks' novel is a no-brainer. The big decision for fans will be which copy: the novel boasts four different covers...

<More than Just Kids' Stuff>

In fact, so much attention was lavished on the titles for younger readers that hardcore *Star Wars* fans of all ages might learn a new thing or two.

Take the Jedi Readers series (Random House, \$3.99 paperback), a four-part "Step Into Reading" program designed to help children advance from the preschool level through the fourth-grade level, offering lures along the way such as collectible stickers and nuggets of Jedi wisdom. While all four Jedi Readers books will appeal to kids, diehard fans should take particular note of the fourth, *Anakin's Fate*.

Like the Terry Brooks novel, *Anakin's Fate* (written by Marc Cerasini, with illustrations by John Alvin) also begins before the movie version of Episode I, and it explains—as no other book does—just how Anakin obtained the engine parts vital to his victory in the Podrace. Children who take the final step into reading with Random House's series by tackling *Anakin's Fate* will find they have a bit of inside

The Jedi Apprentice series takes readers back in time a full 12 years before *The Phantom Menace*, to the first meeting of Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn.

At the beginning of the series, Obi-Wan is

just 13 years old, a boy who dreams of being a Jedi Knight but is running out of time to find a master willing to take him on as a padawan. Readers who follow the series will see the bond between Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon form, and get an early encounter with the dark side when they meet Xanatos, Qui-Gon's rogue apprentice.

<Behind the Bluescreen>

But of course, there's another tradition of *Star Wars* books being upheld with the onslaught of *Phantom Menace* books: the non-fiction tomes that take us, in the words of one popular CD-ROM, behind the magic.

In the past, Del Rey has produced a treasure trove of *Star Wars* books related to the original trilogy, from the *Essential Guides* to the NPR radio dramatization scripts to accounts of the making of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. (Alas, these last two, by Alan Arnold and John Phillip Peecher, respectively, are currently out of print.) Now, Del Rey is back



» **The Illustrated Screenplay is the definitive record of who said what, of course—but it's much more than that.**

with new books that take fans into the director's chair and behind the scenes.

The Illustrated Screenplay (Del Rey, \$14.95) boasts not only the complete script of Episode I, but also an introduction by producer Rick McCallum. It's the definitive record of who said what, of course—but it's much more than that. More than 200 storyboards from the movie's production are interspersed through the script, including a number of key sequences reproduced entirely with storyboards. The effect, Del Rey senior editor Steve Saffel says, will be "to pull the reader through the story even faster," supplying visual cues that will bring the script even more alive. The illustrations are so exquisite, Saffel says, "you almost expect to touch them and have the pencil smudge."

Once you've read the script, you should be ready to start shooting—or at least reading *The Making of Episode I* (Del Rey, hardcover, \$39.95; paperback, \$19.95), by Laurent Bouzereau and Jody Duncan. Bouzereau is a film documentarian who has already provided an invaluable service for *Star Wars* fans with Del Rey's richly detailed *Star Wars: The Annotated Screenplays*, which presented the scripts for all three original movies and traced the evolution of key scenes from Lucas' earliest drafts to their final form. Duncan brings years of experience with *Cinefix* magazine and has a unique knowledge of special effects.

For *The Phantom Menace*, Bouzereau and Duncan had access to every aspect of the making of the movie and were able to talk to everyone involved; the result is an inside look at what went into Episode I, from the story to the casting to the incredible amount of work done on the movie's thousands of visual effects.

<In-Depth Detail>

But that's just the beginning from Del Rey—rest assured that *The Art of Episode I*, continuing another popular *Star Wars* book series, is on tap for fall. But first, from DK Publishing, a pair of much-loved *Star Wars* books from a veteran Lucasfilm author (and *Insider* contributor) will get prequels of their own.

The Episode I Visual Dictionary (DK, \$19.95) follows in the footsteps of the wildly popular book of that ilk created for the classic trilogy last year. Once again, Lucasfilm's Dr. David West Reynolds walks fans through the *Star Wars* universe, offering gorgeous photographs of props and costumes



» **Incredible Cross-Sections presents 14 Episode I ships, illustrated in incredible detail by Hans Jenssen and Richard Chasemore.**

from the new movie, with revealing descriptions of what's exhibited. With the *Visual Dictionary*, fans can gaze to their hearts' content at *Star Wars* characters who may only flash across a corner of the screen during Episode I. They're all here—from every layer of the Neimoidians' costumes and their ubiquitous accounting computers, to all 12 members of the Jedi Council, examined in lavish and luxurious detail.

Reynolds is also the author of *Episode I: Incredible Cross-Sections* (DK, \$19.95), another title that will sound familiar to *Star Wars* fans who snatched up 1998's volume dedicated to starships and technology from the original trilogy. The new book presents 14 Episode I ships,

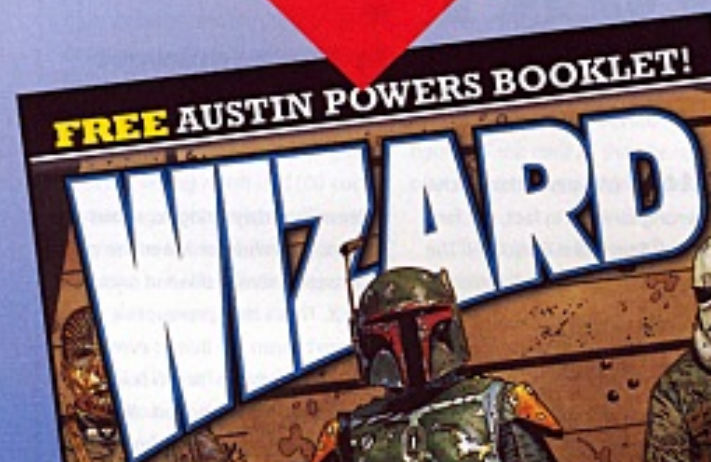
illustrated in incredible detail by Hans Jenssen and Richard Chasemore, the same team who worked on last year's book. For the Episode I tome, Jenssen and Chasemore actually spent some time in the *Phantom Menace* production department, mapping out the anatomy of the various craft created by the artists.

But *Incredible Cross-Sections* isn't just engineering diagrams. Reynolds, an archaeologist, approaches *Star Wars* as if it were any other ancient culture to explore, bringing insights into that universe that you won't find on-screen. For instance, he notes that the ships of Episode I are built in a time when craftsmen still ruled the design world and the vehicles they created were truly art. But that time is fading, and in the harsh lines of the Trade Federation's soulless ships we see a grim harbinger of the

era of the Empire, in which the mechanical look of mass-produced vehicles will be the rule.

But as we look toward the future of the *Star Wars* saga, it's humbling to look back, and remember that a long silence followed *Return of the Jedi's* release in 1983; during that fallow time, some *Star Wars* fans no doubt wondered if they'd ever get another chance to explore more of that galaxy far, far away. Now, Episode I has not only brought *Star Wars* back to movie theaters, but a host of new *Phantom Menace* titles is also letting fans continue their Episode I experience at home—and in their own imaginations. Like Terry Brooks said, it can be fun to keep learning things one bit at a time. ☐

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BOOTLEGS FROM JABBA'S COURT?

THROW 'EM INTO THE JEDI WASTE BASKET by Steve Sansweet

» **Anticipation is building to a fevered pitch!** (Whatever that cliché means...) It's so close we can taste it. It's able to leap tall buildings ... whoops, wrong fantasy. In fact, the fantasy will already be a reality for those of you reading this after the opening of *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. And all of you collectors will already have seen the first wave of Episode I merchandise in Toys 'R' Us, Wal-Mart, Target and scores of other places.

In other words—there's a lot of collecting to do and little time to waste, so on to your questions!

I'm a little confused.

The other day I went to make a trade with another collector and I offered him a Leia figure that I had

last few months to take advantage of the buzz surrounding Episode I. If you'll permit some immodesty, nearly all serious collectors will tell you that the best and most comprehensive one is the book that T.N. Tumbusch and I compiled: the second edition of Tomart's Price Guide

a new high for an item? Definitely not.

An item is "worth" only what someone is willing to pay or trade for it. I know dealers who have certain

items that they bring to shows for years, yet refuse to lower the price because a similar doodad once sold for X. That's their prerogative, but it doesn't mean the item is ever going to sell. As for your Turkish Leia, this is a strange baby indeed. If it says "Uzey" on the card front, as I assume, it's a bootleg, and it's certainly worth more here than in Turkey. It was produced after Return

"What is the best or most accurate price guide, and also is my figure from Turkey worth more in the U.S.?"

—JAMES ROGERS Cocoa, FL

gotten from Turkey. He asked me how much it was worth and I said \$25, as it was listed in *Toyfare*. He wasn't quite sure, so he looked in three different price guides to tell me the truth. So I guess my question is: what is the best or most accurate price guide, and also is my figure from Turkey worth more in the U.S.?

JAMES ROGERS Cocoa, FL

Talk about a leading question! If this were the Internet, I'd use a happy face. In fact, I'll do it anyhow. If there are at least five purported *Star Wars* price guides in the market, most of them published in the

to Worldwide *Star Wars* Collectibles.

That said, a price guide is out of date in really hot areas of collecting—such as action figures—even before it comes out, since much of the information changes almost daily. So some magazines, such as *Toyfare*, *Lee's Action Figure News* and *Toy Review*, Tomart's *Action Figure Digest*, and *Topps' Star Wars Galaxy Collector* have more frequent price updates. But it's still tricky to determine "the truth." Does a onetime online auction—where two fierce rivals are bidding against each other to get the last piece they both need for their collections—set

revenge of the bootleg

A little while back I came across a black T-shirt bearing the red logo of "Revenge of the Jedi." I have looked through several guides and I was unsuccessful in finding any sort of price for the shirt. I picked it up for short money from a local comic store. Although I have no plans of selling it, I'd still like to know its value. Do you have any idea what it may be worth?

SCOTT FOXON Reading, MA

Sure—whatever you paid for it. I don't mean to be a wise guy, but the fact of the matter is that there weren't any red-logo "Revenge" T-shirts mass produced, only some samples ... and lots of bootlegs. Except when a mistake is made (and quickly corrected), nothing that Lucasfilm licenses goes out without a trademark and copyright line. None of these red-logo "Revenge" shirts have such lines, so they aren't licensed. Licensees were told in late fall 1982 that the film's name was *Return of the Jedi*, in plenty of time to change most designs and packaging. I've never heard the term "short money" before, but if it was as short as \$15 to \$20, you picked up an interesting oddity at a reasonable price.



"Last year I purchased a fat-head C-3PO at a local Toys 'R' Us store in a green POTF2 package. I've never seen another and nobody knows what it's worth or how the error was made on the head. Do you know anything about this?"

— HERMILO ZAVALA Chula Vista, CA

of the Jedi, but a large number, including the infamous Blue Stars (a blue painted snowtrooper), were brought into the U.S. about 10 years ago by a major dealer and sold like hotcakes. While most guides don't list bootlegs, many of these Uzey figures are selling north of \$100 each, something that puzzles me. The pricing on Blue Stars, which had an asking price of \$100 a decade ago, has passed the point of sanity.

I did a recent trade with a dealer and picked up some classic Star Wars pieces in exchange for a load of my old G.I. Joe toys. I also picked up a Theater Edition Luke Jedi. But I'm a little concerned. Are there any fraudulent Theater Lukes circulating? I only ask because the dealer seemed a little nervous about the trade and kept rambling on about how they must have pumped these figures out pretty fast due to a seemingly lower quality cardboard used for the card and the fact that the bubble seems to be pulling away. Did I get taken for a ride or am I just a little paranoid?

J. HUFF Mt. Vernon, WA

I know of no bootlegs of the Theater Luke Jedi, which is exactly the same production figure as the regular Luke Jedi. Hasbro printed up 150,000 cards with the Star Wars Special Edition logo, and 50 figures each were given out in theaters across the U.S. for the film's opening. I haven't noticed any difference in the card stock, although it's possible that some pieces are on a slightly different stock. It's also possible that the bubble was opened on yours and re-glued, or that someone started to pull the action figure out and then thought better of it. The

figures, which overnight hit a price of about \$150, have calmed down to under \$100 in most cases. I can remember seeing a diehard collector almost faint when he saw the five-year-old in front of him rip the figure off the card so that he could play with it! What a strange idea!

Last year I purchased a fat-head C-3PO at a local Toys 'R'

Us store in a green POTF2 package. One of my friends had one on a red card and sold it for \$300 at San Diego Comic Con. I've never seen another and nobody knows what it's worth or how the error was made on the head. Do you know anything about this?

HERMILO ZAVALA Chula Vista, CA

Nope, I sure don't. A fat-head C-3PO? Maybe Ephant Man sat on his face? Or Threepio got too close to a torture device in Jabba's basement? Or the assembler in the Chinese factory missed a manufacturing defect? I honestly have never heard of this, and if Hermilo or anyone else can send me a photo, I'd like to share it with other collectors. As far as worth, obviously \$300 to at least one person.

I got on aluminum C-3PO Pez dispenser that was handed out to the first 100 or so people in line at a Philadelphia-area toy show back in 1997; it had no packaging. I haven't seen this

a royal project

Could you please explain the meaning of the numbers on the back of the Hasbro figure cards? What's the difference between a .00 and .03, for instance? Are certain card colors or numbers rarer? Also, what do the freeze-frame slides do to the values of the earlier cards without them?

P.S. We love the magazine and want to know what you think of the Jabba's palace and throne room we built last summer.

TODD & BEN SPENCER, PAT & NATE RAMEAXA Mansfield, CT

Hasbro, like most other toy makers, refreshes its line every year so that both retailers and customers know there's something new on the shelves. Otherwise, today's shoppers might not even look twice. That's why we've had the red-orange cards, the green cards with and without foil stickers, the freeze-frame cards and now the cards with talking chips. The numbers on the bottom of the backsides of the cards usually indicate a revision on the card to correct a typographical error that somehow slipped past vigilant eyes, or to add a warning label on the front that somehow was missing. Most collectors want the earliest versions of each card, but variation hunters want a sample of each, leading to some controversy in collecting circles. Only time will tell whether such variations will remain at different price levels, as they usually are now. The freeze frames don't make earlier cards any more or less valuable—only older.

P.S. Thanks, and your construction project looks great!



with that same issue. I am a doctoral level music student, and I credit my first exposure to the score for *Star Wars* as the catalyst for my choice to pursue a career in music. I have met countless other students who express the same view.

Perhaps *Scouting the Galaxy* does not realize that full, totally complete orchestral scores are craved by many so that they can be used for study. Could the *Insider* use its influence to begin the campaign for the preparation and, perhaps, limited printing release of the complete scores from the *Star Wars* films? Students with this intense interest are already familiar with the options kindly offered by *Scouting the Galaxy*. We eagerly await the complete written complement to the re-released full soundtrack albums.

JACK KOHL Columbia, SC

Well, I'll tell you one thing right off the bat, Jack: you've hit on the one thing for which our readers fail to consistently honor us: the *Insider* has influence. Well my friend, for that alone I'm happy to print your letter to get your ball rolling.

I agree that John Williams' scores for the *Star Wars* movies are

"For years now, I have been making the lightsaber sounds with my mouth... My family and friends are amazed at how realistic these noises are." —MARK STALNAKER, PAMPANO BEACH, FL

nothing short of masterpieces—see *Star News* on page 23 and our John Williams interview on page 54 for more on the man who brings music to the galaxy. More than anything, though, your letter illuminated an aspect of the *Star Wars* experience that frequently is overlooked—while we're all familiar with new filmmakers talking about how *Star Wars* inspired them to be directors or special effects artists, it's easy to overlook the growing legions of musicians and music scholars who discovered their love for the art thanks to the classic trilogy. For that reason alone, I'll agree that the complete and unabridged scores to *Star Wars*, *Empire*, and *Jedi* ought to be made available to universities and serious musical publishers, just as the films and their annotated screenplays are available to filmmakers. May the Force be with you in your quest.

All that Glitters

Kudos to the *Insider* and her magnificent staff on the remarkable

job done for *Insider* #41. I very much enjoyed the cover story on Ewan McGregor and the impressive pull-out (it graces my refrigerator as you read this). However, that is not why I felt compelled to write. A question was posed in *Rebel Rumblings* by "Spud" from Canada: "Coruscant, the Imperial city-planet. Where did this name come from?" I felt it necessary to point out that it did not come from Timothy Zahn's imagination, as the writer suggested, but more likely from his thesaurus. "Coruscate" is a Latin-based word meaning "to glitter, sparkle"—quite appropriate, really, for the crown jewel of the Empire's real estate. Timothy Zahn does deserve some credit, though, for knowing a good word when he saw it. I am an aspiring fantasy writer myself, and I know how challenging it can be to come up with appropriate names. Keep up the fantastic work!

"WILLOW" BURKE
Terre Haute, IN

Willow, if you ask me, Timothy Zahn has known many good words in his day—and put them to pretty good use. Thanks for the props on #41—good to know Obi-Wan is guarding your leftovers. And oh, "Willow," about that full-name-on-the-letters policy...

Saber Rattler

I was wondering if you could help me to get in touch with Ben Burtt, who does the sound design for the *Star Wars* films. For years now, I have been making the lightsaber sounds with my mouth. My family and friends are amazed at how realistic these noises are. I think I could become an asset to the production of Episode I as well as the other two prequel films in that a good deal of money could be saved on expensive synthesizer equipment.

MARK STALNAKER
Pompano Beach, FL

Mark, don't get me wrong, because normally I'd be putting you on the plane to Skywalker Ranch myself—but for the one problem in your theory, which otherwise is clearly flawless: unfortunately, Ben Burtt

already bought all the expensive synthesizer equipment for the prequels, and he only had until last month to return them because he got a special deal on some used stuff. But if only we'd known!



Gold Leader

My husband is an avid *Star Wars* fan and has often shared with me the neat pictures that fans have sent in and you published in *Rebel Rumblings*. I think he has an equally unique item your readers may find interesting. He is an Advanced Strike Instructor in the U.S. Navy and has created a replica Luke helmet with reflective tape (the only thing they are allowed to stick on their helmets). This is the helmet he flies with on a daily basis, so I asked him to take a picture of it airborne for a "project" I was working on. You can see another T-45A in the reflection of his visor (orange and white, just like an X-wing). His name is Lt. Burt "Yak" Yaroch, and I would love to see the look on his face if he sees this picture in his favorite magazine. Thank you for your wonderful publication!

JULIE YARUCH
Corpus Christi, TX

Bantha Tracker

What a big surprise I found in *Insider* #41 when I looked at the photographs on page 62 in the article "Retracing Bantha Tracks" of the 1979 screening of *Star Wars* in Los Angeles and found a picture of myself (top photo—of the three standing Vaders, left side) attending the event! (It was a day long remembered!)

Also attending this event was Mr. David Prowse (Darth Vader himself) and Mr. Anthony Daniels (C-3PO). Both of these gentlemen endured the Los Angeles heat with grace, answered a million questions from a million fans, and both appeared to enjoy the excitement. Thanks for printing those photos—it was nice to re-live the moment through your publication. Included in this letter are a few additional photographs of this event that I took myself (or had taken of myself as Vader). Feel free to use any of the photographs you wish.

MICHAEL G. PRESCOTT
Santo Mario, CA



» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

walls, and even Christmas tree stands which were transformed into vents.

"The art of set decorating is making the best out of what you have around you," noted Walpole. "I'd have a day off and go shopping, and all of a sudden see something, grab it, turn it upside down and think, 'God, that would be really good.' If there was something that we could use, we would try to use it."

Walpole was especially excited about two sets, in particular, in *The Phantom Menace*.

"Watto's junkshop was good fun to do," he says. "I also love Anakin's hovel, because as George said, it is one of the first sets that is



Production Designer Gavin Bocquet, Director George Lucas and Set Decorator Peter Walpole discuss the Mos Espa main street concept set model at Leavesden Studios. Photo by Giles Keyte.

actually personalized. There was no other real personal living quarters in the other *Star Wars* films. And that was fun to create a nine-year-old kid's bedroom and to make it have the same feel as a contemporary child's room, but

"I'd have a day off and go shopping, and all of a sudden see something, grab it, turn it upside down and think 'God, that would be really good.'"

obviously with *Star Wars* dressing."

So how does Walpole know when enough is enough and a room is complete? "It's something in your heart that all of a sudden you stand back and say, 'Yep. That's it,'" explained Walpole, who was adding small touches up to the minute before Lucas was called to see Walpole's work. "You're forever adding a little bit on the window sill or something down at the foot of the stairs that nobody can see, but when the director walks on, he gets a complete feeling. Not everything is seen by the camera. You've got to stand back and look at your own house and realize that there might be one shoe in a corner of a room, and it may never be filmed but it makes it a living area."

The seasoned set decorator said his most important goal was to make sure that the sets did not overpower the actors and the story. He knows that those two elements are what audiences should be concentrating on, and if they're distracted by a set piece, it is not for the benefit of the film.

"In everyday life you take so many things for granted in your own home that you're comfortable with the way it looks," he said. "Normally, there's no one thing in your home that completely jumps out, that when people walk in they go, 'Wow! Look at that!' And that's how George likes his sets to look—that they should be a background painting that people feel comfortable with, that people can study, but nothing must detract from the storyline and the actors."

Walpole also stuck to the belief that each set, no matter how simple or elaborate, deserved the same care as any other set. With that in mind, *Star Wars* fans can expect to see spectacular results. "No one set got any more treatment than the next, whether it be a room which was 12-feet-by-12-feet or an aircraft hangar that was 300 square feet. They were all special and all deserved as much concern and enthusiasm as the other."

Since bringing his eye for detail to the *Star Wars* universe, Walpole decorated sets for the more down-to-earth upcoming film *Brokedown Palace*, starring Claire Danes, Kate Beckinsale, and Bill Pullman. In addition to *Young Indy*, his past set decorating stints

include *White Nights*, *Absolute Beginners*, *White Mischief*, *King Ralph* with John Goodman, and director Neil Jordan's *Company of Wolves*.

As for his work on Episode I, Walpole hopes that fans will consider it in the spirit of the previous *Star Wars* films. "I hope they'll walk away and say that it was a true *Star Wars* film," he said. "It's quite a bold move to make a prequel so long after the original ones. Because it's been 22 years since *Star Wars* first came out, people are going to be skeptical. They're going to think, 'Well, maybe they'll do something that isn't in the *Star Wars* theme. I hope audiences go away having thoroughly enjoyed a really exciting film that can definitely be part of the *Star Wars* family.'" ☺



Actor Silas Carson plays the role of Trade Federation Viceroy Nute Gunray in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*.

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It's a lot of work, but Carson isn't complaining. "I never thought I'd get involved in this at all—it was quite an extraordinary thing, really," he said. "What I can't wait to see is the little dolls."

It is all a lot — it's got to be, for a kid who grew up in the *Star Wars* generation. "It was fantastic working with Yoda," he marveled. "They were setting up Yoda in the middle and then to his left is Sam Jackson, and to his right is me. We were watching them getting underneath, and Frank Oz getting his hands up inside Yoda, preparing him, and Sam and I were just fascinated with this. I turned to him and said, 'Isn't it just brilliant finally getting to work with Yoda?' And he said, 'Yeah, I'm so excited working with this little guy!'" And it was funny, because Yoda's one of those characters that's been with you for years and years, as were Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy, and here was the guy who helped invent them all, created them all. It was like working with a part of your history."

Silas Carson, welcome to *Star Wars* history. May the Force be with you. ☺

who's next?

Got a favorite *Star Wars* SUPPORTING actor you've never seen interviewed? Email your suggestions to Scott Chernoff in the *Star Wars* universe: SWuniverse@aol.com. Due to time limitations, I'm unfortunately unable to reply personally; this is not the address for Rebel Rumblings.



the last page



» This striking Episode I illustration was created by *Insider* staff artist and Australian native Hugh Fleming. If you've got an idea for this page, or would like to submit your own work, write to: "LAST PAGE," c/o *Star Wars Insider*, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80043, for submission guidelines. DO NOT SEND ARTWORK WITHOUT GETTING GUIDELINES FROM US FIRST.

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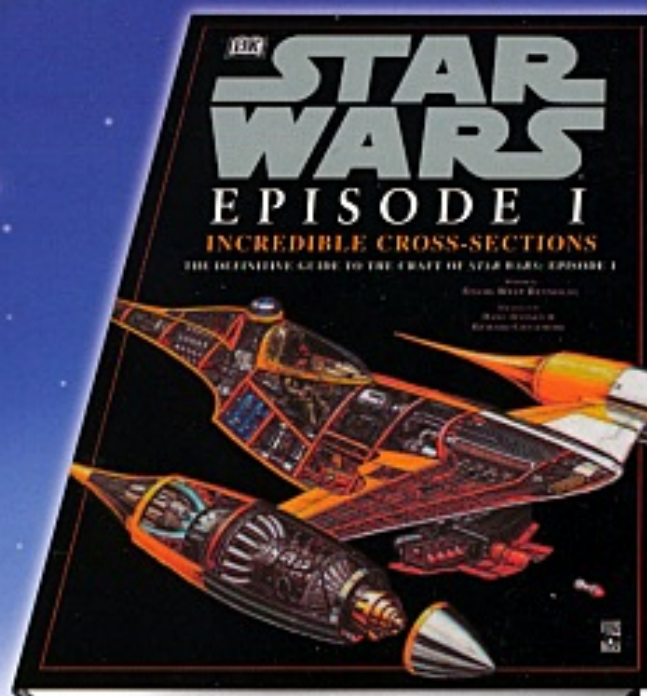
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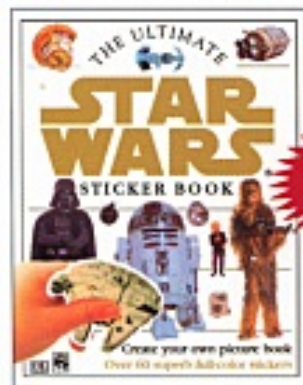
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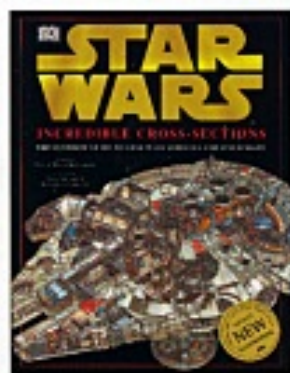
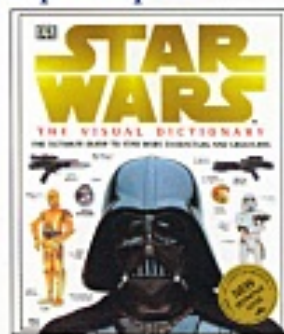
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